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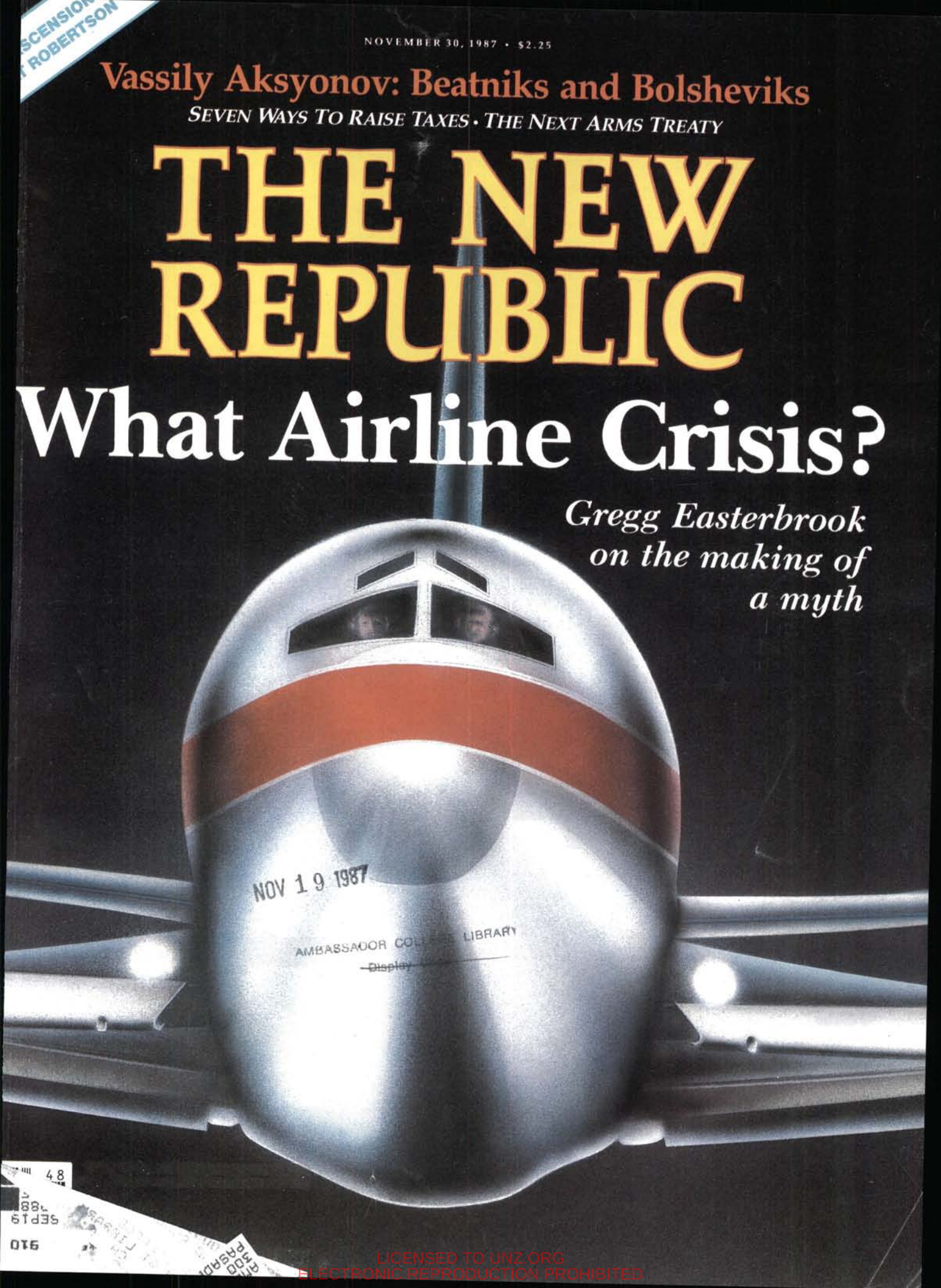

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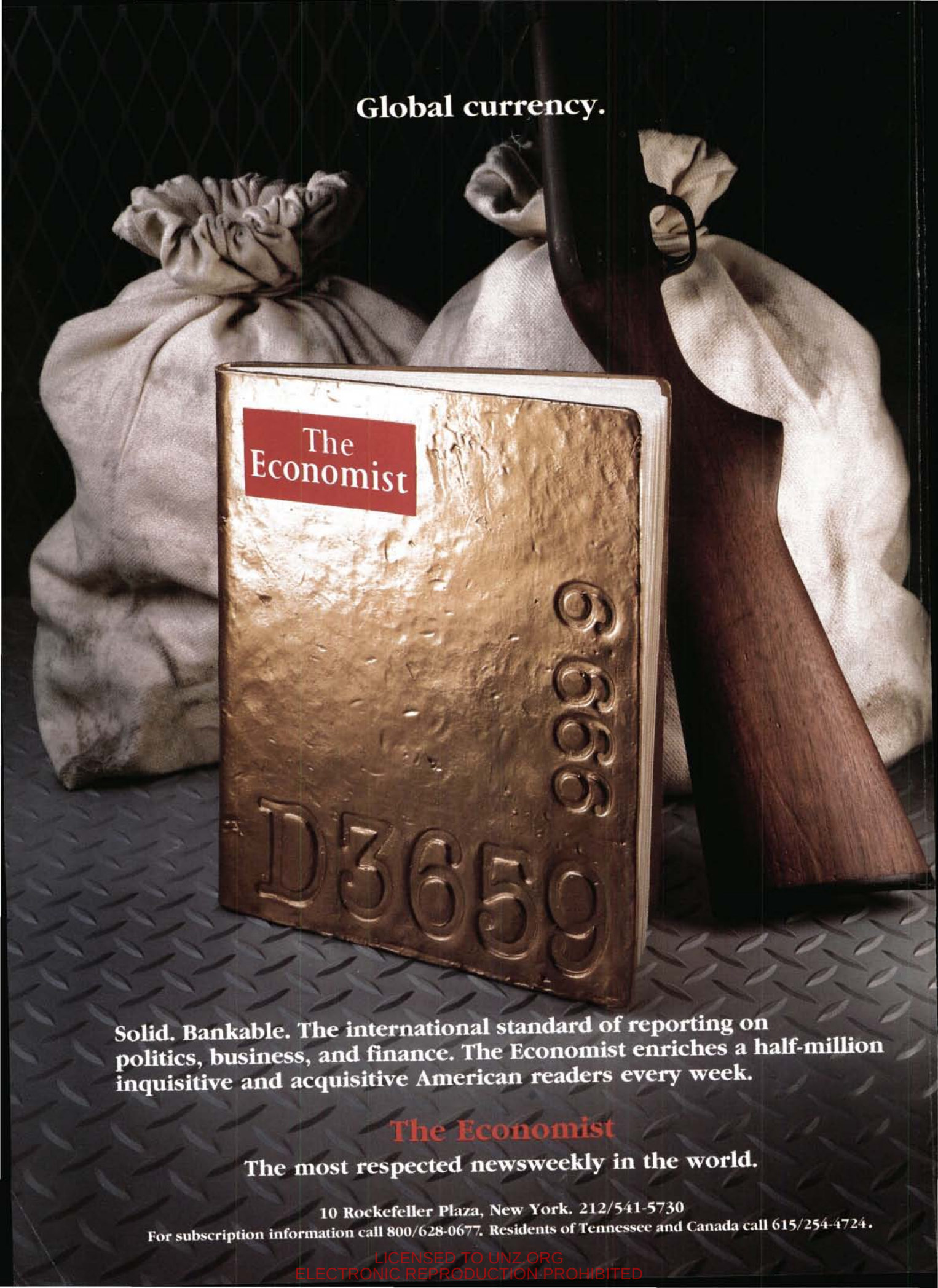
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FOUNDED 1914 — *A Weekly Journal of Opinion* — ISSUE 3,802

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CORRESPONDENCE

GAUGING COMPETITIVENESS

To the editors:
In exposing the malarkey surrounding "competitiveness" ("The Competitiveness Craze," November 2), Robert Kuttner does not mention the metamorphosis of the word. Industries that are "perfectly competitive" have so many firms selling identical products that no one has any effective control over price. But the firms in the vanguard of any foreseeable export revolution will mostly be oligopolistic rather than "competitive," in the original economic sense of the term. The outstanding "competitors" today are precisely those firms that by their success vis-à-vis rivals are causing their industries to be no longer classifiable as "competitive." Is it time to retire this word?

DAVID GEORGE
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

To the editors:
In "The Competitiveness Craze," a minor but important point was missed. If America expects to sell its products to the rest of the world, we must embrace the metric system. Even if Japanese or German buyers wanted our cars or machinery, they would think twice because of the necessity of buying tools that would not fit anything else in their plant or home.

DAVID J. MANN
Crescent City, California

GASEOUS MATTER

To the editors:
Large government subsidies on ethanol are impractical if ethanol makes up only ten percent of gasohol ("Anatomy of a Rip-Off" by John A. Barnes, November 2). But legislation requiring all U.S. fuel to be composed of 50 percent ethanol signals a substantial cut in our dependence on foreign oil. And corn is a renewable American resource, whereas fossil fuels are not.

Barnes claims the U.S. import quota, while keeping the price of U.S. sugar at an artificially high 22 cents a pound, depressed the world price to six cents and left sugar-producing countries, including Haiti and the Dominican Republic, without a market. Yet the November '87 *National Geographic* claims that the Haitian American Sugar Co. closed last April because, at 27 cents per pound, they were consistently undercut by a smuggling trade bringing into Haiti duty-free sugar at 24 cents per pound from the Dominican Republic and Miami.

J. ALLYN PAINTER
Falls Church, Virginia

To the editors:
I was impressed that John Barnes was able to unearth and explicate the gasohol rip-off without understanding the chemistry. Ethanol *is* what a layman calls "alcohol." Chemists call it ethanol, or ethyl alcohol, to distinguish it from other alcohols. Thus, ADM does not refine and blend "corn with alcohol to form ethanol"; corn is a raw material used to make ethanol. Small-time producers keep an eye open for "revenooers" when they do this. As Barnes points out, ADM's attitude toward government intervention is quite different.

MARSHALL E. DEUTSCH
Sudbury, Massachusetts

ALLEGRO CON BRIO

To the editors:
By now, apologies for my review of Joan Peyser's *Bernstein* ("The Music Man," June 22; apologies: June 29, October 26) have become almost a regular feature of TNR. So, for a change of pace, I offer no apology at all. I simply refer all parties to the text of my essay, which is clear about both my view of the book and of the conductor and his music. The point in quoting a series of episodes from the book was not to disseminate tasteless stories about the subject's manners or lack of them, but to demonstrate unambiguously the book's approach.

But an assessment of Bernstein's character and image is not irrelevant. His scornful attitudes toward himself and his colleagues, and his uncertainty about his place in musical life are intimately connected to his music-making. The virtuoso is a private individual who, through his playing and persona, presents a dream image of a culture; he transforms the personal into the mythic. Paganini's dream image was of the devil; Liszt's dream image was of—well, an essay is to come. As for *Bernstein,* I thought it was worth beginning a discussion of the myth, the person, and his version of the virtuoso. No apologies needed.

As for the book's own accuracy, should Gore Vidal or anyone else be dissatisfied, he should discuss the matter with the author and publisher of the book, not with the publisher of a disapproving review.

EDWARD ROTHSTEIN
Brooklyn, New York

CLASS CONFLICT

To the editors:
Democracy, popular culture, and family life on the one hand, liberalism, high culture, and gender justice on the other—if these are, as Benjamin Barber argues in his review of my book *Democratic Education* ("The Battle of the Books," October 26), the "antinomies" at "the crux of the modern ideological conflict over educational policy," then the responsibility of academics is to argue against these simplistic alternatives. Barber does not address or even acknowledge my arguments, among them that the democratic ideal of conscious social reproduction incorporates certain liberal commitments.

Barber suggests that democratic education would require replicating a society beset by illiteracy and mediocrity. Nothing could be further from the democratic ideal I defend, which requires that children "be taught enough to participate intelligently as adults in the political processes that shape their society."

A philosophical defense of democratic education is no substitute for the politics necessary to institute it. But such politics will not be advanced by academics who, following Barber's advice, "dash into the middle of the fray with sabers drawn and trumpets sounding on behalf of the nation's children"—unless they also know and can defend where they are going.

AMY GUTMANN
Princeton, New Jersey

NOT A SELL-OUT

To the editors:
Before A.S. dumps too mordantly on pop music and U2 in particular (Washington Diarist, "Actually," October 26), he should consider both the recent surge in contributions to Amnesty International and the demonstrated ability of U2 to galvanize young people around the ideals of justice and service rather than money and outstripping peers. Even for a cultural pundit that's not too banal, is it?

GEOFF POPE
Brookline, Massachusetts

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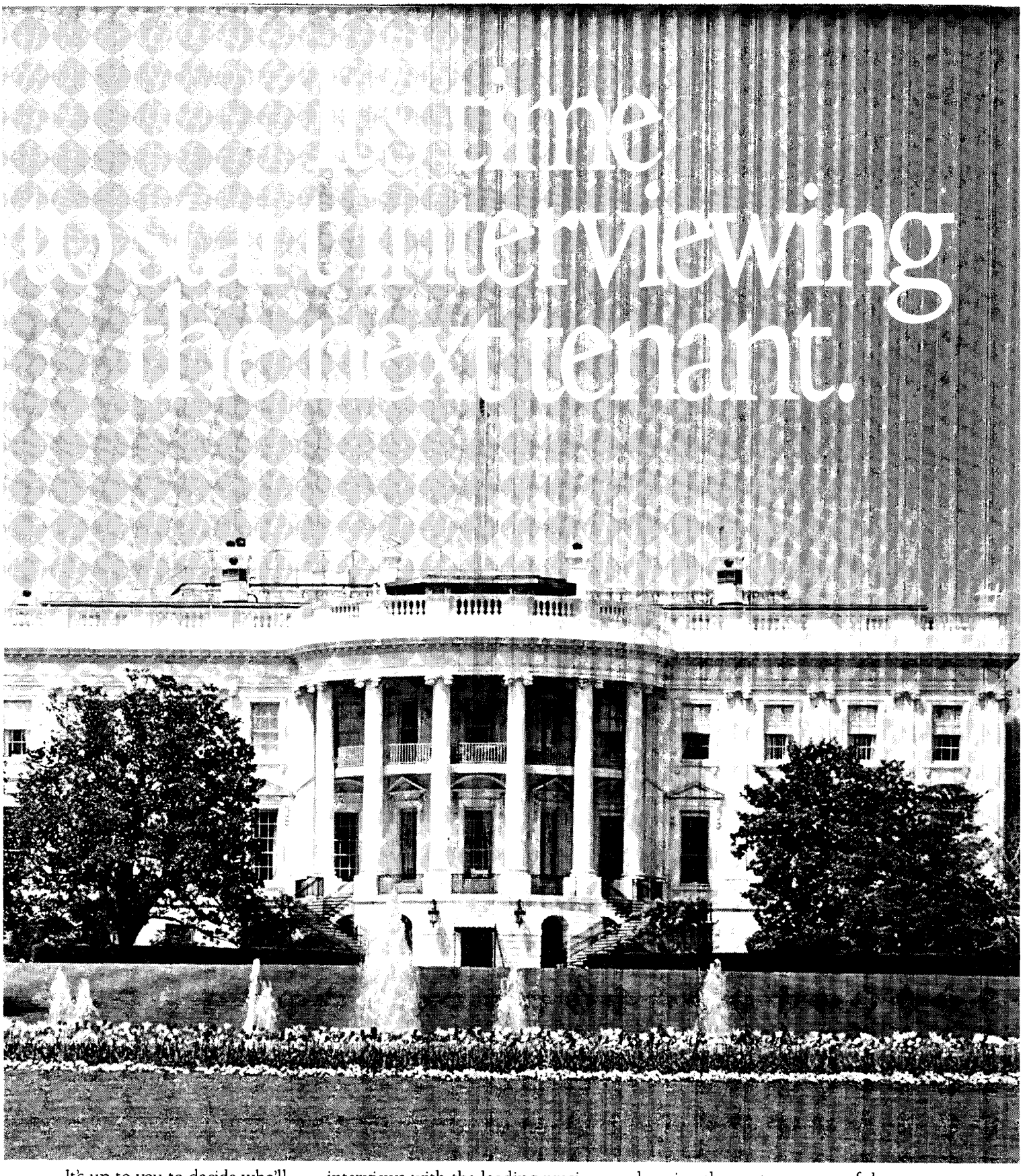
time. to start interviewing the next tenant.



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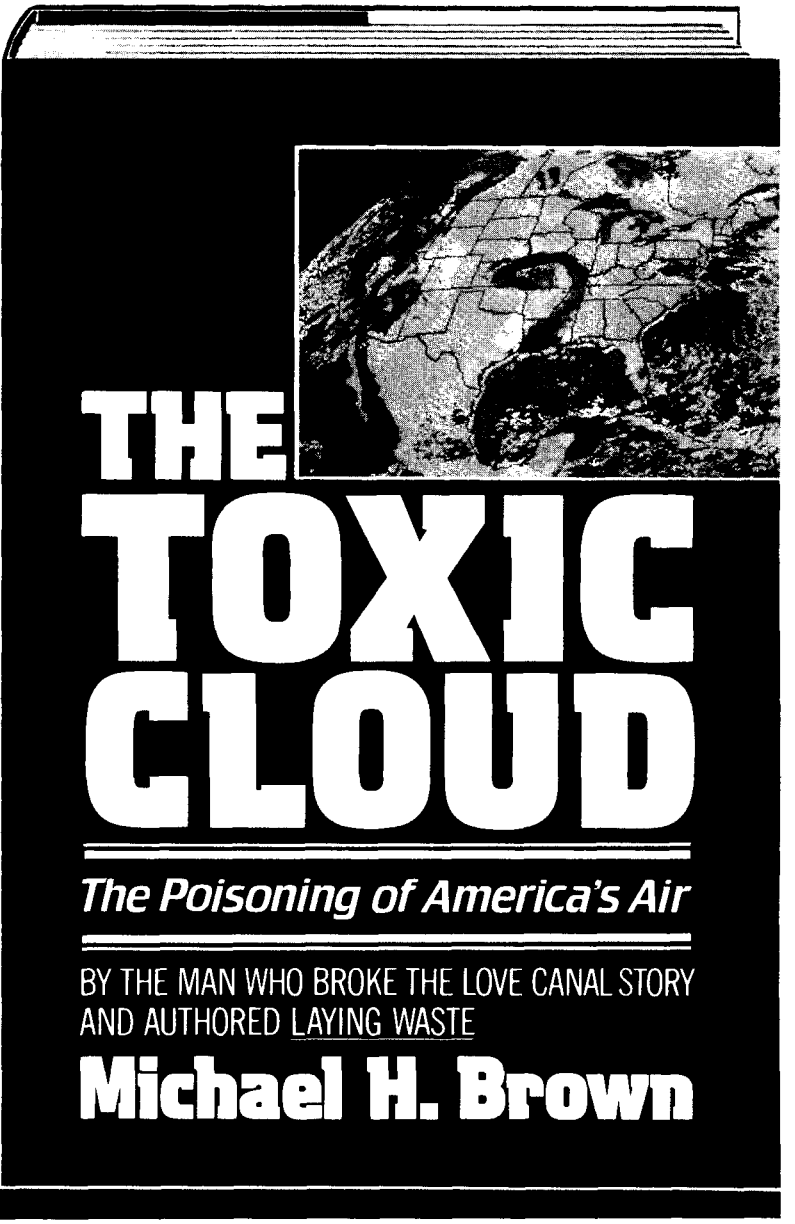

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
NOVEMBER 30, 1987

THE JOBS CONUNDRUM

After five straight years of economic expansion, the unemployment rate stands at six percent. But even as most Americans worry that the party may be ending, a large minority never got to enjoy it. While only four percent of white men aged 20 or over are looking for work and can't find it, over ten percent of black men and 12 percent of black women are unemployed. For black teenagers, the rate is about 30 percent. That's actually better than it has been—the August 1986 rate was 40 percent—but it's still unacceptably high. Why is it that the long boom has done so little for those who most need the help? Why, with "Help Wanted" signs sprouting everywhere, are so many people still collecting welfare checks?

There are jobs to be had, and not just for computer programmers and nuclear physicists. Employers on both coasts are struggling to find workers. They're often offering wages considerably higher than the $3.35 an hour minimum, for jobs that require low skill levels. Boomtowns such as Los Angeles and Boston struggle with an underclass problem and a labor shortage at the same time.

Many bottom-of-the-economy jobs have long been filled by middle-class teenagers rather than poor adults. Now that the baby boom has grown up, the number of teens is declining. In the service economy of the 1980s even "unskilled" jobs require more than brute labor. They require literacy and other basic skills. Even a fast-food job requires that an employee know how to read, to accept orders from a supervisor, to show up for work on time, to treat customers in a friendly manner, skills the hard-core unemployed, consisting mostly of inner-city blacks, frequently do not have. Many of them, particularly black unwed mothers, have never held a job.

In addition, the new jobs that need to be filled are likely to be far away from the inner cities where the underclass dwells: in the new suburban "satellite cities" or in entirely different regions of the country.

Solving the paradox of simultaneous labor shortages and high unemployment among the urban poor would put the country on a sounder economic footing. Business would benefit from having a new pool of available labor. Government would benefit by turning welfare recipients into taxpayers. The unemployed will get jobs, and a boost out of poverty. Those critics who say that many service sector jobs are dead ends are wrong. Especially for people who have never worked, any job is a good thing, opening the door to a better paying, more skilled position later, as well as giving them a valuable sense of self-worth now.

Connecticut recently lowered the minimum age for most jobs from 16 to 15, which helps both labor-starved employers and money-hungry youths. A number of states, most notably Massachusetts and California, are experimenting with workfare programs that train enrollees and then help them to find jobs. There are bills in the House and Senate to institute workfare on a national scale. Though they don't allot nearly enough money, they're good beginnings, and deserve support.

But the problem is above all a test of American capitalism. Business has taken steps in the right direction: private company investment in worker training now totals some $300 million annually, according to the American Society for Training and Development. But there's a reluctance on business's part to try truly new methods of worker training. There are steps government and business can take to bring a new generation of American workers out of the underclass while increasing the competitiveness of American business.

Educational reform. The Department of Education estimates that there are between 17 million and 21 million illiterates in the country. Some 500,000 students annually drop out of high school and become unemployed—and

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unemployable. Improving education, one way to keep them in school, will require money, of course, but also a change to a pragmatic view, particularly for teachers. Students drop out because school seems irrelevant to their lives. In the ghettos, kids need to see that staying in school is, literally, profitable. Businesses should have a presence in city schools to remind children that they aren't there just to discuss *The Catcher in the Rye*, but to acquire job skills that will help them find work. Students who are, say, 15 or older could be allowed to take classes half the day, then work—for wages—in the afternoon, or one day a week, and receive some course credit for their work. But only kids enrolled in school could get into such a program.

Another possibility is that businesses, particularly coalitions of large companies, could found schools of their own. These wouldn't be a replacement for public schools, but an alternative, which would prevent the schools from deteriorating into the 20th-century equivalent of the company town. What's taught wouldn't have to be much different than a standard curriculum. After all, the study of English or history or science is important whether one wants to be an academic or an entrepreneur. The schools would be a natural—though not obligatory—feeder into the corporations that sponsor them.

Bring the workers to the jobs. The suburbs are booming, as a walk through Bethesda, Maryland, or Stamford, Connecticut, shows. But while 75 percent of new jobs are in the suburbs, the people needed to fill them aren't. Potential employees often don't know what jobs are available and couldn't get to them if they did. Businesses should recruit in the cities, and work with state and local governments on ways to do so. Links with workfare programs make sense. And employers should not limit recruiting to nearby cities. A New York firm now promises to bring in Chinese peasants to work on California farms. Economic shifts have always

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

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9.	WHITER SHADE OF MALE	—	1
10.	THE MATING GAME	—	1

1. THY ROT AND THY STAFF

Political entropy. Take Reagan's uninvolvement, add Baker's funk, stir in Meese's injudicious influence, simmer over a hot, uncontrolled power struggle. The result: cooked goose. The White House reminds even Republicans of the early Marx Brothers, but grins are fading. Europe is dumbfounded—the French are speaking of *crétinisme*.

2. REEFER BADNESS

Post-Ginsburg. Reagan's blunders have backed conservatives into a series of corners. The Bork fight ended in a solid South endorsement of the Warren Court, strengthening the principle of judicial activism. The right's forced shrug at libertinism in the Ginsburg fiasco was surreal. A chance to alter the Court's balance is gone.

3. ALONG COMES MARY

Marijuana. The point of the brief pot bubble is that marijuana use has become less controversial than cigarette smoking. A large majority of Americans had told pollsters that they didn't care about this even at the presidential level; a similar number said it should have been irrelevant in Ginsburg's case.

4. YOUR BOTTOM DOLLAR

Crash aftermath. Confidence is up, though this may be an ignorance-is-bliss phenomenon. As for the dollar's fall and other economic influences, nobody understands how they fit together, so they don't think about them. The Social Security debate is a replay; first the op-ed page builds a case for reform, then the feature pages destroy it with sob stories.

5. STREET WHERE YOU LIVE

Homelessness '87. The homeless are a November perennial; temperatures drop, civil libertarians sue, Mitch Snyder fasts. The deinstitutionalization debate is back, but shortsighted redevelopment—razing downtown housing—has been overlooked as a factor. The preservation lobby, of all people, was years ahead on this issue.

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

6. BRITISH INVASION

IRA terrorism. Sri Lanka's terrorists are getting more play than they used to, but nothing compared with the IRA. The U.S.'s long-standing affinity with Britain has become inflamed in recent years; Britain's weather is news. Indeed, the U.S. now covers Britain the way Lebanon's Maronites cover France. Anglophilia this intense was once limited to America's upper classes. This is a gentrification of foreign coverage.

7. CASTE A GIANT SHADOW

Stratification. Intellectuals, Jacoby argues, have disappeared into the universities. U.S. literature, Fiedler has claimed, has long been imprisoned there. Hirsch says there's no shared literacy. A two-tier TV audience is developing. Malls have stratified shopping by caste. Now Murray Bookchin argues that the amorphousness of U.S. cities limits citizen politics. Where do these intersect? A disappearing common ground of U.S. public life.

8. SERIOUS NOTICIAS

Bilingualism. Market forces are transforming the U.S. language landscape right under the English-only lobby's nose. CNN is planning Spanish broadcasts that could lead to a full 24-hour Spanish-language news service. Add Spanish-language ad campaigns and dubbed-into-Spanish Hollywood films [ZC, passim], and you have a supportive non-English environment.

9. WHITER SHADE OF MALE

Oy music. An overtly racist, anti-Semitic brand of blue-collar British rock has found an audience in some U.S. cities. Violent skinhead gangs in Chicago, Cincinnati, the Bay area, et al. are passing around "white-power" tapes by such groups as Screwdriver; some U.S. groups have also formed. The phenomenon is small, but this is an unexpected route to neo-Nazi bonding.

10. THE MATING GAME

Chess. The Karpov-Kasparov matchups are among chess's greatest rivalries, but Americans are uninterested. Is the problem chess's lack of body contact? The game's U.S. supporters are trying to recast chess as a sport, its players as athletes. Fitness has a role in the grueling matches, but the pretense that the game's focus is other than intellectual is proling at its silliest.

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involved worker migration, as evidenced by the flood of job-seekers into Texas during the oil boom of the 1970s. Surely, then, it's not farfetched to look for Americans in neighboring states.

Companies will have to charter buses to get these new workers from the city to the suburbs, especially where public transportation falls short. If the distance is too great for a daily commute, the company should help workers find affordable housing, pay moving costs, and do whatever it can to make the transition easier.

Make it profitable for those on welfare to take these jobs. Not many people are going to take a job that pays less than welfare. Even jobs that pay considerably higher than the minimum wage can be difficult to live on. One solution is for companies who hire workfare participants to pay a genuinely good wage—say, six to nine dollars an hour. For a limited time, perhaps six months, the state or federal government could partially subsidize that wage. After that the company would have to pay the whole wage—but by then it would have a fully trained worker, almost certainly more productive than six months earlier, and more valuable to the company.

At the same time, companies have to address the day-care problem, and not just for top executives and anchorwomen, especially since the federal government shows little sign of doing so in any coherent way. Perhaps this too could be arranged in conjunction with workfare programs.

Work with existing unions. Initially, new low-wage workers entering the labor force are likely to bring union opposition. Unions need to understand that if these people aren't made employable, companies will look abroad for new workers. Unions should cooperate because in the long term the new entrants could swell their membership by several million. Unions could help with worker training, providing, for example, both facilities and funding. They could certainly run literacy and day-care programs of their own. Today one doesn't join a union to get a job but to protect one already found. That could change if unions helped transform unskilled, illiterate workers into employable ones.

BAN PROGRAM TRADING

We may never know all the reasons why the stock market crashed last month. But we do know that program trading—the computerized selling of stocks—took a healthy chunk out of all our pocketbooks when it overwhelmed the age-old human mechanism of finding people to take the other side of the trade. It is bad policy for the New York Stock Exchange to lift its ban on program trading before the market has stabilized.

Defenders of programmed trading cite its use in portfolio insurance. A program trader can "insure" against losses by selling futures as a hedge on a portfolio. Or he can sell stocks and buy futures, or vice versa, to lock in a risk-free profit. Proponents say portfolio insurance helps reduce the risk of owning stocks that have had a long run in the bull market. They say that the arbitrage between stocks and futures helps provide liquidity—a ridiculous buzzword meaning there are more buyers and sellers around. But it does not mean that those buyers and sellers will be there at the right time or be matched correctly. Portfolio insurance spells chaos for all our markets and should be banned for good.

Program trading happens so swiftly and with such ferocity that the system of matching buyers and sellers breaks down. Normally, large buyers can be located by brokers within a point or two of the last sale for all but the most distressed merchandise (Union Carbide after Bhopal, Texaco after Pennzoil, et al.). But on the Tuesday following the crash, 22 of the 30 Dow stocks simply stopped trading as programs spun out of control. Only the threat of having to close the exchange altogether provided the impetus to suspend program trading.

Unregulated program trading makes a mockery of all other kinds of securities regulation. The knowledge that a programmed trade is about to go off that could crush IBM is as harmful to the market as inside information on a takeover. In fact, traders with knowledge of programs have a greater edge. With trading in S&P Index Futures, which require less margin than required in the pre-1929 market, a small bet against the futures can cause a tidal wave of selling in the equity markets. As long as index futures are linked with the equity markets by computer, the speculators and arbitrageurs can dictate common stock pricing.

The program trading supporters—the brokerage houses that profit from the commissions on these trades, or gain from arbitrage programs done for their own accounts—have forgotten why the capital markets exist: to raise capital for companies in a fair way for buyers and sellers alike.

Investors must be confident that the price received bears some resemblance to the quote given when they entered their orders. Who can blame someone for crying foul when he enters a sell order for General Motors and it gets executed ten points later because a program beat the order to the computer? Let's restore a modicum of sanity to the markets and pull the plug on the programmers for good.

NOTEBOOK

□ STOP THE TOURMOBILE, THIS I GOTTA SEE: "Washington, D.C., is a city lying in the gutter, wallowing in hypocrisy. It has become a bizarre sinkhole of character assassination and smirking self-righteousness. It will eagerly cast not only the first stone, but any other rocks it can lay its hands on." —editorial, *Wall Street Journal*, November 9

□ IT DOESN'T ADD UP: The administration apparently has decided to let the dollar sink as an alternative to raising interest rates—the only available options as foreigners become reluctant to keep financing our twin deficits. This was probably the right choice. However, it reflects a conscious decision to lower American living standards

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through inflation—making us pay more for foreign goods and their domestic competitors, and therefore consume less. That is why it is especially aggravating that the administration and Congress, in their budget negotiations, apparently have abandoned the notion of limiting cost-of-living allowances for Social Security and federal pensions. American consumption *must* decrease, and federal borrowing *must* decline, for the dollar devaluation to work without leading to higher interest rates and a recession anyway. Why should pensioners, alone in our society, be protected from this mathematical fact of life?

□ THE SLEAZEBALL WATCH: For a while, during the sunny afternoon of the Reagan era, Washington influence-peddlers stopped denying the obvious. In fact, they bragged openly about their connections in high places. The trial of former Reagan aide Michael Deaver has caused a reversion to the old coyness. Testifying at that trial on November 3, former national security adviser Richard Allen insisted, in a pompous and bizarre locution, that "my connections have nothing to do with my business activism."

□ NERVES:

Falling Dollar No Longer Alarms U.S. or Investors

—*Newsday*, October 30, page 43

Concern Grows On the Dollar

—same paper, same day, page 45

□ ADDENDUM: Like Bob Dole, Hendrik Hertzberg, who will be following the 1988 election for TNR, offers "a record, not a résumé." However, in summarizing the latter last week we should not have omitted that he is a senior associate of the Joan Shorenstein Barone Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy of the John F. Kennedy School at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

□ WHY GET UP?

Scientists See Vast Changes in Earth

But little consensus emerges on what they might mean.

—*New York Times*, November 4

A testimonial for Doug.

JUST SAY NO COMMENT

"The professor, who describes himself as one of Ginsburg's friends, [said] smoking dope was 'not a big deal.' . . . 'We would sit around, talking, passing a joint, smoking and laughing.' Subsequently another Harvard professor, Hal Scott, who describes himself as Ginsburg's 'best friend,' confirmed that he saw Ginsburg take a couple puffs of pot at one party and scolded him about it the next day." —*Newsweek*, November 16

"It's not enough to succeed, one's own best friend must fail." —French proverb

He was always alone. At parties he was among us and yet somehow apart. At faculty discussions he'd stand there solemn, Gatsbyesque, high above it all. I remember once at a Friday afternoon tea—I believe we were talking about tort liability of federal officers—he sat in stony silence in the corner without saying a word. The dean even asked him a question, something to do with the resale price maintenance agreements under the antitrust laws. It was supposed to be his speciality, but he didn't answer. He just smiled weakly, as if to say all things must pass.

Even to me, his best friend, he always seemed kind of distant. I guess it was because he used to wear thick glasses and a heavy beard and it created a kind of barrier between him and the rest of the world. Whenever I asked him if everything was all right he'd nod or say, "Far out." We were very close.

You have to remember, I've known him for years. Our wives knew each other. I cared deeply for the man, still do. He had a quality of mind that was so unusual, so individual, it was amazing. Someone said he was dropped on his head as an infant, but I doubt it. We used to teach a course together. He was a great teacher, I thought, a really terrific lecturer—except that sometimes he'd slur his speech and get confused. Occasionally he got totally disoriented and read the same cue card over and over until some helpful student told him to go on. But that happened very rarely, maybe once or twice in the '60s and a few times in the '70s.

He was always popular with the students. He was the kind of guy who, even if he had a difference of opinion with somebody, even if it was such a serious difference that it involved his principles, he still would be open-minded and considerate. Once we were talking about the legalization of certain illicit substances. It was very risqué, though at the time people were probably more permissive. He said we all should see both sides of the issue and had all the students try the illegal substances just to see what it was like. He was such a creative teacher, always helping kids expand their minds.

You want to know a perfect example that sums him up? It was that computer-dating service he ran. It was so funny, because, as I said, he was very withdrawn, very quiet in his manner. Of course, it wasn't until years later that we found out he was actually running an underground international child prostitution ring. But he's very modest, as I said.

That's the kind of guy he was: always kidding, always looking for fun. I think he'd make a great member of the Supreme Court.

ARI Z. POSNER

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CAMPAIGN '88

ROBERTSON ASCENDANT

VICE PRESIDENT George Bush was not the only, or even the biggest, winner of the Republican debate in Houston on October 28. The candidate who made the most headway was Pat Robertson, the former TV preacher. He scored two ways, says GOP consultant Eddie Mahe. Robertson reassured supporters from his "700 Club" days who wondered whether he'd perform as well in his secular role of presidential candidate as he had as a televangelist. He showed others he's not a hot-eyed zealot or know-nothing. He also won the expectations game. In a poll by SRI Research Center of voters in 13 early primary or caucus states, 31 percent agreed that Robertson "improved his position and did a better job than expected." He also gained the most in the before-and-after polls of voter preference. Senator Bob Dole dropped from 23 percent approval pre-debate to 18 percent. Representative Jack Kemp went from five percent to seven percent. Bush moved up one percent, from 42 percent to 43 percent post-debate. Robertson jumped from 12 percent to 16 percent.

Robertson's success in Houston means all the more trouble for the other candidates and for the Republican establishment. Robertson may not be able to win the GOP nomination, but he can make life miserable for a lot of Republicans. He may give the party too strong a Christian right identity and hurt Republican candidates in 1988—a short-term loss. At the same time he may attract thousands, maybe millions of lower-middle-class voters, even some blacks, who otherwise wouldn't be Republicans—a potential long-term gain. But Robertson's backers have a tendency to take over local Republican organizations whenever they can, and the regulars understandably resent it. If room isn't made for the Robertson people or if they drive out as many or more Republicans as they bring in, there's no gain at all.

The most immediate threat Robertson poses is to Bush's and Kemp's prospects for the nomination. Robertson may embarrass Bush in three early caucus states. A Robertson victory in Michigan is likely on January 30, humiliating Bush in a state he once thought he had locked up. The Bush campaign has tried to pretend that the process really begins in Iowa and that Michigan doesn't matter. That won't fly. Ronald Reagan tried it in 1980 in Iowa, refusing to debate or campaign extensively there. He lost the Iowa caucuses to Bush, and was nearly blown out of the race as a result. Reagan had a month to recover before the New Hampshire primary. Bush will only have nine days. Bush's hope is that the press will give Michigan short shrift. But the press, eager for the real campaign to start, won't hold back. There will be winners and losers and real delegates will be selected. Rather than play down Michigan, the media will magnify it, particularly if the front-runner, who isn't a press favorite anyway, gets clobbered. A loss in Michigan is bound to affect Bush's chances in Iowa on February 8. That's simply the way the process works: how you do one week affects how you do the next. A Bush defeat in the first event could be devastating.

In Iowa the size of Robertson's support is unknown, even to Robertson operatives. Robertson himself once declared he'd turn out 70,000 people at the caucuses. If he did that, he'd win going away. Bush supposedly has the best organization in the state, but Robertson topped him in a straw poll of 3,800 Republicans in September. The loss shook Bush and his strategists, and they hastily dispatched Rich Bond, the campaign's second-in-command, to Iowa full time. Bond notwithstanding, Robertson has a chance of finishing ahead of Bush in Iowa, which would be a crushing blow.

In the third caucus state, Minnesota, Bush's support is already thin, and Robertson has a good chance of finishing third, behind Kemp and Dole but ahead of Bush. A fourth-place finish for Bush in Minnesota wouldn't help.

FOR KEMP, the Robertson menace is even more ominous. Kemp has labored long and hard to win the backing of conservative movement activists. Robertson is blocking this. "Robertson is killing Kemp," says Stuart Rothenberg of the Institute for Government and Politics. "If Kemp finishes fourth in Iowa and third in New Hampshire, who does he have to blame for that? Robertson. Robertson has made it impossible for a united conservative coalition to back Kemp." And the debate made things worse. "The hidden story of Houston was Robertson beating Kemp," says Todd Domke, a Republican consultant. "Robertson made Kemp seem smaller, while Robertson himself seemed more presidential because he can caress the camera better than Kemp."

Kemp's strategy is to be nice to the Robertson campaign in hopes of inheriting Robertson's supporters. "The idea is that Robertson, when he gets past the early stage, won't do well," says a Kemp adviser. "And when that happens, Robertson will fade and Kemp will be the viable conservative." There are two flaws with this plan. First, Kemp won't be in a position to be the viable anything if Robertson finishes ahead of him in the early states. All Kemp will get is unfavorable press coverage and an early exit from the race. A candidate who finishes fourth in Iowa won't be a credible contender anymore and won't be able to raise money. Robertson "hurts anybody he can beat," says Jeff Bell, Kemp's deputy campaign manager. "If he can beat us in Iowa, it hurts. The same is true for Bush and Dole."

The second flaw in Kemp's game plan is that it's no longer clear that Robertson will fade once the race turns to primaries, with far larger electorates involved than in caucuses. By March 8, Super Tuesday, Robertson may be the only "viable" conservative left in the race to appeal to Southern voters. In that case, he may be able to reach outside his evangelical Christian base and attract regular Republican conservatives. Rather than Kemp picking up his backers, he'd pick up some of Kemp's.

One aspect of the Robertson campaign that has largely

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escaped national attention is the takeover of state and local Republican parties. Robertson supporters now control the GOP in Michigan, in some counties in Iowa (including the most populous, Polk), and in many counties across the South. They have a good chance of seizing control in Virginia. When Robertson people gain power, party regulars, especially moderates, wail. In Florida Republican Chairman Jeanie Austin was quoted as saying regulars are alarmed that Robertson's evangelical backers didn't help build the party but "are coming in now telling us how to do our business." In Iowa former GOP National Chairman Mary Louise Smith told the *Des Moines Register* that inroads made by Christian activists will "narrow the base of the party" and may make it "self-destruct." She said that moderates are becoming less active as a result, creating an "imbalance in the party."

In Virginia the caucuses, spread out from March 1 to May 15 in counties and cities, are perfect for Robertson. This allows his supporters to wage a series of small organizing efforts, which is what they are good at. Not only could he wind up winning most or all of the state's 50 delegates, but he could decide the party's Senate nominee by controlling the state convention next June. Already there is tension between Robertson backers and party regulars, some of whom are eager to change the rules and have some of the delegates chosen in the primary on March 8. The Robertson camp opposes any change. Turmoil has been kept to a minimum by State Chairman Donald Huffman, a boyhood friend and nominal backer of Robertson, who has kept the two sides on good terms. That won't be as easy next year. A full-blown fight between evangelicals and regulars "would make the GOP comeback in state offices much more difficult," says Larry Sabato of the University of Virginia. Democrats are set for a bitter fight for the governor's nomination in 1989, but Republicans may be distracted by intraparty squabbling.

MARC NUTTLE, Robertson's campaign manager, dismisses the complaints of moderates and regulars as similar to those made against Reagan and his allies in the late 1970s and early '80s. But it may be more than that. Two political scientists, James Guth and John Green of Furman University, studied the attitudes of Robertson backers, Reaganites, and regular Republicans. Their conclusion, published in *Election Politics* magazine: "Clearly Robertson is a divisive force in the GOP." They found many Republicans "very hostile" to Robertson and the Christian right. While Robertson backers are willing to support other Republican presidential candidates, regulars balk at Robertson. "Indeed, many mainstream Republicans claim they could not accept Robertson on the ticket under any circumstances," Guth and Green say. In the long run, this animosity may ease as evangelicals are assimilated into the GOP. In the short run of 1988, though, it means strife and bickering. Or worse, if Robertson wins the nomination, an outcome that is unlikely but no longer inconceivable.

FRED BARNES

After INF, the next arms treaty.

THE REAGAN METHOD

BAD AS THINGS now appear for him on many fronts, Ronald Reagan may yet go down in history as a great negotiator. Almost certainly, he will sign one arms control agreement next month to eliminate intermediate-range nuclear missiles from Europe. Discussions are under way that may lead to an epic agreement reducing strategic arsenals by 50 percent. And the administration either has started or is contemplating talks to limit nuclear tests, chemical weapons, and tank concentrations in Europe.

But even if all he achieves is the INF deal and perhaps a framework agreement on strategic weapons, Reagan has taught future presidents some great lessons about negotiating. There is a pattern to his conduct of negotiations—a Reagan Method—that future administrations should study and perfect. The method also applies in domestic circumstances.

Some elements of Reagan's negotiating style are just classic hard bargaining—especially a willingness to hang excruciatingly tough and avoid the appearance of overeagerness for (or, sometimes, even caring about) a deal. The key to the Reagan Method, however, is to create a new asset on the U.S. side that actually threatens assets on the other side, thereby giving the adversary a compelling incentive to deal and settle on favorable terms.

Example: INF. Ronald Reagan did not invent Pershing II and cruise missiles as the answer to Soviet SS-20s. Jimmy Carter and the NATO allies did. Yet when the freeze movements in Europe and America were campaigning for unilateral non-deployment on our side, and the Soviets walked out of arms talks, the administration insisted on going ahead with INF. Without Pershing IIs, which can hit the Soviet Union, the Soviets almost certainly would not have agreed to dismantle their SS-20s.

Example: SDI. The SALT II deal signed by Jimmy Carter and Leonid Brezhnev permitted each side to deploy 2,250 strategic launchers that, according to the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, could carry as many as 14,000 nuclear warheads. The Reagan administration has already got the Soviets to agree (in principle) to a limit of 1,500 delivery vehicles, 6,000 warheads, and a 50 percent reduction in the most-threatening category of weaponry, heavy missile warheads. The incentive for deep cuts almost certainly is Reagan's Star Wars initiative, which threatens Soviet nuclear targeting strategy and Mikhail Gorbachev's economic plans (if the Soviets are forced to match it).

Example: the *contras*. It's impossible to conceive that the Sandinistas would have agreed to the Arias peace plan if the United States had not applied pressure through the *contras*. Whether or not the *contras* ever could defeat the Sandinistas, they pose a threat to the Nicaraguan economy and the government's control. That's why, if Congress defunds them, the U.S. hand will be

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weakened in Arias-spawned negotiations.

Example: tax cuts. Democrats are engaging in serious talks with the administration about cutting spending primarily because Reagan has cut taxes and created a domestic doomsday device, the deficit, that threatens Congress's ability to expand federal programs. If Congress wants taxes out of Reagan, which he persistently hangs supertough about, they are going to have to agree to spending cuts.

THE REAGAN METHOD is a variation on the Republican pattern of bargaining-chip diplomacy as practiced by Richard Nixon. Nixon fought the Democrats in Congress for the right to deploy an anti-ballistic missile system. When he won, the Soviets suddenly became willing to bargain, and Nixon gave ABM away in a 1972 treaty. However, ABM was no threat to the Soviets, as INF and SDI have been. Reagan indulges in bargaining-chip diplomacy too, as when the administration won the right to deploy binary nerve gas, inducing the Soviets to begin serious talks. INF was a bargaining chip and taxes may yet prove to be. But the basic Reagan Method of threat-creation most resembles the strategy Eisenhower employed in 1952, getting North Korea to talk by hinting he might use nuclear weapons on them.

Democrats tend to believe in goodwill offerings as a way to win concessions from adversaries—as Carter did with Nicaragua in 1979—and tend to scale down U.S. demands to make them reasonable to the other side, as Carter did in abandoning a deep-cuts strategic proposal in 1977 when the Soviets rejected it. The Carter administration was willing to play bargaining-chip diplomacy with INF and the MX missile, but liberals in the party harshly resisted. As a rule, congressional Democrats and presidential candidates favor nuclear freezes and weapons bans and oppose the *contras*, Star Wars, and other Republican inventions—all in the name of getting along with the adversary.

Even if the Reagan Method gets adversaries into serious talks, it does not guarantee results. To get a good deal, one has to be willing, in the end, to deal. The danger is that the president may fall in love with the bargaining chip and refuse to give it up—ever. This appears to have happened with SDI (and the jury is still out on taxes), although part of Reaganite hard-bargaining all along has been to create maximum confusion about whether the president cares more about principle or the bargain.

Some administration officials and outside observers think that Reagan can actually win a 50 percent reduction in Soviet strategic arms without significantly limiting Star Wars. These include Carter's former national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who says that Gorbachev is so interested in relaxing tensions and obtaining economic credits that he will ultimately drop his demands for tight restrictions on SDI. If this happens, Reagan will go down as a great negotiator, indeed.

Administration arms control negotiators concur that there has been some loosening in the Soviet stand on SDI, in spite of Gorbachev's last-minute efforts at Reykjavik and Moscow to throttle the program. Reagan aides say they expect Gorbachev to make another lunge at SDI when he comes to Washington in December, although they also expect Reagan, once again, to deflect it.

The Soviets have moved considerably from their original position that the very existence of SDI constitutes a violation of the ABM Treaty. They have proposed three basic devices to confine the program: (1) a link between START and the separate Defense and Space (DNS) treaty whereby strategic reductions would stop if DNS terms are not met. Within DNS, they want (2) an agreement that each side will not withdraw from the ABM Treaty for ten years, and (3) a provision for "strict adherence" to terms of the 1972 agreement "as negotiated and ratified," which seems to require observance of the so-called "narrow" interpretation of the treaty, banning space tests of lasers and other exotic anti-missile components.

Lately, however, the Soviets have suggested a complicated alternative idea by presenting lists of miniature experimental devices that could be space tested—low-intensity lasers, small mirrors, and weak kinetic-kill vehicles (anti-missile bullets)—indicating to some officials that they are willing to back off from "strict adherence." Lately too they have come up with language suggesting that development of defensive systems could proceed as long as it led to "strategic stability," but no one on the U.S. side is sure whether that language is a major concession or a euphemism for old demands.

The Reagan administration is proposing a seven-year continuation of the ABM Treaty, meaning that no SDI program would be deployed during that time, but wants the Soviets to agree to a "broad" interpretation of the treaty to permit space testing of components and a "green light" provision allowing both sides to deploy SDI when the treaty expires.

THE TWO SIDES are very far apart on offensive weapons provisions as well. At Reykjavik they agreed to reduce their arsenals to 1,500 delivery vehicles and 6,000 warheads, but there was no movement after that until Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze brought a new proposal—presently unacceptable to the United States—to Washington in early November. It provides that each side would have between 3,000 and 3,300 land-based ICBM warheads, between 1,800 and 2,000 submarine-based missile warheads, and 800 to 900 air-launched cruise missiles and/or bombers.

The United States objects because the Soviet proposal would require scrapping half the U.S. submarine-based missile force, which our side regards as its most secure deterrent. The administration is proposing a limit of 4,800 ballistic missile warheads on each side and, under that ceiling, upper limits of 3,300 on ICBMs and 1,650 on heavy ICBMs and mobile missiles, if they are permitted (which the United States hopes they will not be).

It seems almost impossible that the two sides could get a treaty signed and ratified by the time Reagan leaves office. One official said, "Look at how long it took us to get to zero-zero on INF with only three systems involved. We

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still have 30 or 35 issues to iron out before the summit. With START, there are six land-based missile systems on the Soviet side alone, plus subs, plus numbers of bombers and cruise missiles. It's a verification nightmare."

So the two sides seem to be heading—if anywhere at all—toward a framework agreement, to be sealed at the next summit in Moscow in 1988. The U.S. side thinks Gorbachev wants an agreement badly and will make big concessions to get it. But will he relax his demands for restrictions on SDI, and will Reagan give him anything in return?

U.S. arms controllers think that Reagan will agree to non-deployment of SDI for a set period of years—seven or ten—but doubt that he will agree to any further restrictions, especially on testing. If he were to agree to testing limits, conservatives in the Senate might vote down the INF treaty. Mostly, though, it's because he believes in SDI.

According to Reagan aides, so does incoming Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci, who joined Secretary of State George Shultz in telling Gorbachev last month in Moscow that limits on SDI were no deal, even at the risk of canceling the December summit. The difference between Carlucci and his predecessor, Caspar Weinberger, is said to be that Carlucci likes to negotiate and reach agreements—good ones—whereas Weinberger opposed practically any bargain with the Soviets per se.

On the Soviet side, Americans think Gorbachev might also settle for a non-deployment pledge in the formal agreement, backing far away from present Soviet policy. However, some Americans think he might also announce unilaterally that Soviet START reductions depend upon U.S. compliance with the "narrow" interpretation of ABM, meaning no space testing. Then he might rely on the U.S. Congress to confine SDI testing within that limit, much as Congress has threatened to enforce the narrow interpretation so far and to contain U.S. forces within the SALT II treaty.

Whether or not the grand deal—offensive reductions for SDI limits—comes about in this administration and Reagan gets credit for it, it has been made possible by SDI and the Reagan Method of negotiating. The next administration ought not to forget that, especially if Reagan leaves it to his successor to finish his work.

MORTON M. KONDRACKE

Revenues without tears.

A FEW GOOD TAXES

THE STOCK MARKET panic has done what countless polemics could not manage. At long last policymakers seem to be serious about reducing federal budget deficits. Everyone favors reducing deficits by spurring economic growth. But the reality is that we will be lucky to achieve the growth projections underlying current forecasts of deficits in the $200 billion range. The only realistic way of reducing deficits is to cut spending or to raise taxes.

Raising taxes need not mean increasing the low tax rates embodied in the 1986 Tax Reform Act. Nor need it mean a major new national consumption tax. The happy truth is that we can raise vast sums by doing things that would be good public policy even if we did not have a large budget deficit. Here are seven ways to raise taxes in a manner that will make the economy more efficient and competitive. While some of the suggestions, taken alone, are regressive—burdening poorer people more than wealthier ones—the package as a whole is just the opposite: highly progressive.

1. Raise taxes on alcohol and tobacco.

One out of every five deaths in the United States is linked to alcohol or tobacco. People may have the right to do whatever they wish to themselves, but smoking and drinking have important social consequences. Government health care bills are inflated by an estimated $7.7 billion per year because of illnesses caused by smoking and $8 billion per year because of alcohol-induced illness and accidents. Employer health insurance premiums are increased by as much as $50 billion because of smoking and drinking. Evidence mounts that ambient smoke is harmful, and there is no denying that drunk drivers cause more than 20,000 deaths each year.

Increasing taxes on alcohol and cigarettes would reduce their social burden. Most smokers say they want to quit. Taxes can help them. The cigarette tax went up eight cents in 1982; studies suggest that this caused two million adult smokers to quit, and stopped 600,000 teenagers from starting to smoke. This will avert several hundred thousand premature deaths. Comparisons of states with and without substantial taxes on alcohol consistently reveal a strong statistical relationship between low taxes and high death rates from automobile accidents and cirrhosis of the liver.

An increase of 25 cents in the cigarette tax would only restore the tax to its 1952 level after adjusting for inflation. It would raise about $5 billion in tax revenue. Making up for inflation in the tax on distilled spirits and taxing beer and wine at the same rate would raise $7 billion. Besides saving lives, these tax increases would improve American competitiveness by reducing employers' health insurance burdens and the costs of absenteeism.

2. Tax the capital income of foreigners.

A major goal of the recent tax reform was to prevent wealthy individuals from escaping taxation. Yet Congress entirely ignored a politically attractive target—foreign holders of American financial assets. Essentially all interest earned by foreigners is now tax exempt.

Taxing foreigners is fair. At a time when the debt crisis in Latin America is a major concern, our tax policies have the perverse effect of encouraging capital flight from these debtor nations, since they have no effective way of taxing

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interest income earned in the United States but do tax capital kept at home.

More important, our current tax policy subsidizes foreign borrowing by Americans because it favors foreign over domestic lenders. Critics of taxing foreign capital are right to point out that it would slightly increase American firms' borrowing costs. But on balance this is a good thing. We cannot improve our trade balance as long as we are borrowing abroad on a massive scale. Eliminating subsidies to foreign borrowing would reduce foreigners' demand for dollars and thereby accelerate the decline of the dollar to a point where American producers can compete effectively on world markets. In addition to improving American competitiveness, withholding taxes at a rate of 30 percent could raise up to $5 billion a year.

3. Tax financial engineering.

People who invent better widgets earn a profit reflecting the social value of their innovation. But consider people who invent better ways of predicting who will win tomorrow's horse races, or what earnings General Electric will announce tomorrow. The innovator will be able to profit, but only by winning a zero-sum game. His knowledge has no social value, but it enables him to take advantage of those who are less well informed. These examples suggest a general principle. Left alone, market forces will direct too much effort into speculation and too little into the development of new products.

This is exactly what has happened in the United States in recent years. Financial trading activity has increased enormously. Financial innovations such as the futures market in stock market indices, which were supposed to reduce transactions costs, have only increased the amount of human capital devoted to trading rather than creating wealth. It is instructive to note that in Japan securities companies draw their employees from the bottom of university classes, while in the United States the very best business school graduates go into investment banking.

The situation is actually worse than a zero-sum game. As Black Monday vividly demonstrated, short-term speculative activity makes the market less stable. And it forces companies to take the short rather than the long view in making their investment decisions. A tax of a half percent on exchange of financial securities, like the taxes imposed in Britain and Japan, would have a negligible impact on long-term investors. But it would take much of the juice out of the short-term trading game and would encourage long-term wealth-enhancing investments. It also would raise more than $10 billion a year from people who can surely afford to pay.

4. Limit tax deductions for advertising.

When Ford invests in new equipment to improve its productivity, it can't deduct the full cost right away. Rather, it has to spread the deduction over several years, on the logical grounds that the equipment will be used several years. When Pepsi pays Michael Jackson several million dollars to appear in its advertisements, or Mobil buys space for its own editorials, or Boeing advertises about the importance of a strong national defense, they are also making investments that will pay off over a number of years. But, unlike equipment investments, these expenses can be deducted in full right away.

This creates an unfair bias against investment in tangible equipment, and in favor of investment in marketing and advertising. Fairness aside, this bias makes no economic sense. Unlike tangible investments, much of advertising cancels itself out, as firms compete with one another for a pool of customers. What little effect advertising has in increasing total spending is probably not desirable. With a national saving rate of two percent, the last thing the United States needs is a tax bias toward stimulating consumption.

Requiring firms to amortize 60 percent of their advertising outlays over four years, while deducting the other 40 percent right away, would raise $10 billion a year!

5. Reform trade quotas.

Protectionism is bad economic policy. We should aim to dismantle trade barriers here and abroad. But it is inevitable that some protectionist policies will remain, and so it is important to recognize there are better and worse ways to protect domestic industries. The worst way is with a quota on foreign imports. By restricting supply, quotas allow domestic and foreign firms alike to increase their prices.

There is a better way. Rather than simply giving away quota rights as we do now, we could auction them off. This would cost consumers nothing. It would merely divert the foreign firms' quota profits into the federal treasury. It also would have the important virtue of publicly illustrating just how much quotas themselves are raising prices and costing American consumers. Auctioning quotas is feasible. New Zealand and Australia already do it. It could add between $4 billion and $7 billion a year to federal revenues.

6. Raise gasoline taxes.

Federal and state gasoline taxes average 22 cents a gallon, compared with $1.60 a gallon in Western Europe. Despite the rise of OPEC, the gasoline tax is lower in real terms today than it was in 1959. Raising gasoline taxes would encourage energy conservation, which has fallen off since the decline in oil prices. It also would force motorists to pay for more of the congestion, maintenance, and accident costs that they impose by driving.

A gasoline tax is far better than an oil import fee. A gas tax would fall mostly on consumers, while an oil import fee would reduce the international competitiveness of the many firms that use oil in their production. An oil import fee, furthermore, would confer a huge windfall on the domestic oil companies, by allowing them to raise prices an equal amount. Given their proclivity to invest outside the oil industry, it is hard to see why this is appropriate. Gasoline taxes are powerful revenue rais-

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ers. A 15-cent increase in the gasoline tax would raise $14 billion a year.

7. Improve tax compliance.

IRS audits indicate that the government loses about $80 billion each year because of tax cheating on legally earned income. While only six percent of wage income goes unreported, almost one-sixth of dividend and interest income and one-half of capital gains income is not reported to the IRS. Tax cheating erodes the fairness of the tax system and redistributes income from honest to dishonest taxpayers.

How much tax revenues can be increased through improved enforcement is a subject of intense debate. But three facts are not in dispute. First, five percent of all returns were audited in the 1960s, but only 1.1 percent were audited last year. Second, compliance is much better in situations where taxes are withheld or information reporting is required. Third, extra auditors bring in enough new revenue to cover their salaries many times over, even forgetting about the generalized deterrent effect of an enlarged IRS.

A conservative estimate would be that restoration of the audit rate to its level in the 1970s (2.5 percent), increased publicity, withholding requirements on dividend and interest income, and information reporting on capital gains could increase tax collection after several years by $10 billion to $15 billion a year. The effect on individuals' voluntary reporting could make that number much larger.

Altogether the measures described here could raise about $70 billion a year while creating incentives favoring productive over unproductive activities and restoring important elements of fairness to the tax system. Tax reformers all too often worship at the shrine of neutrality, looking for taxes that will disturb the economy as little as possible. They set their sights too low. Raising taxes while improving incentives is about as close to the proverbial free lunch as we are likely to get.

LAWRENCE SUMMERS

Lawrence Summers is the Nathaniel Ropes Professor of Political Economy at Harvard.

A guide for anti-communists.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

THE CONTEST BETWEEN the revolutions of 1776 and 1917 constitutes the overriding political choice of our epoch. The first extended the frontiers of human freedom, inventiveness, and productiveness, although grievously flawed by slavery and Jim Crow. That these veils were eventually vanquished, however, tells much about the system's underlying character. Sad to say, the existence of racism, discrimination, and even slavery did not distinguish America from a thousand other societies. What did distinguish it was the victory over racism, an act of collective conscience so intensely felt that we have since gone on to the era of affirmative action. Where in history is the precedent for *that*? Where else can you imagine that a minority race, economically impoverished and politically weak, is given preferential treatment by the dominant majority in order to atone for past injustice?

The second revolution, now being celebrated in Moscow, began with the most catastrophic political experiment in history. After 70 years, the only frontiers that it has extended are those of tyranny, cruelty, and mass murder. It has, however, been at least as successful as the democratic experiment in reproducing itself. Today, more than one-third of the world's people live under each system.

SO WHAT IS to be done if the first revolution is to outlast the second? First, we must restore the term "communist" as a category in our political discourse. Domestically, we have been unable to speak about communism for nearly 35 years: the crippling legacy of McCarthyism. The unwritten rule of our public discourse is that no one may be called a communist unless he has been the Communist Party's candidate for president. The Party's national ticket in 1984 was Gus Hall for president and Angela Davis for vice president. Newspapers identify Gus Hall often as a communist, but Angela Davis is almost always termed a "black activist."

Some say this is trivial, because communists are few, but the problem does not concern only communists. It is also considered improper to call someone pro-communist, and their ranks are not so small. That category includes groups such as the Institute for Policy Studies, various agencies of the National Council of Churches, Ed Asner and other Hollywood stars, and several members of Congress. The ability to apply terms like communist or pro-communist is not something to be desired for the purpose of launching congressional investigations or police actions against these people. The purpose is to be able to discredit them, not as "subversives," but as people whose political perceptions or moral values are so deeply flawed that their counsels deserve no weight. When the Democratic front-runner Jesse Jackson embraces Castro and Ortega, he has told us all we need to know about his qualifications for the presidency. So what if he has interesting ideas for, say, improving the quality of inner-city education? It is as if one sought out a psychotherapist and found in his waiting room a wall bedecked with portraits of his heroes—Charles Manson, the Marquis de Sade, and Madame de Farge. Who would want to stay around for the appointment?

In comparison, anyone who can be shown to have supported undemocratic rightist governments, such as Somoza's, Botha's, or Pinochet's, is politically stigmatized. Much the same happens when people are identified as

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Birchite, or as far right. The *New York Times* last month, for example, referred to one of Jeane Kirkpatrick's leading supporters in New Hampshire, former Governor Meldrim Thomson: "Mr. Thomson, a one-time member of the John Birch Society, served three terms as governor." Can one imagine the *New York Times* writing of, say, Representative George Crockett, "Mr. Crockett, a one-time follower of the Communist Party, has served three terms in Congress"?

In the '40s Crockett was part of the communist faction ousted from the UAW by Walter Reuther; in the '50s he participated in the support campaign for the Rosenbergs; in the '60s he was a vice president of the National Lawyers Guild; in the '70s he spoke at a banquet for *People's World*, the Communist Party publication; in the '80s he abstained when Congress voted 416-0 to condemn the shooting down of the Korean airliner by the Soviet Union. And last year he served on the U.S. Preparatory Committee for the World Congress of the World Peace Council, a Soviet front.

Crockett succeeded Michael Barnes as chairman of the House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs. Prior to Barnes, the chairman had been Representative Gus Yatron of Pennsylvania. (An opponent of *contra* aid, Yatron last year earned a 65 percent correct voting rating from Americans for Democratic Action and an 82 percent rating from the AFL-CIO.) But in 1981 the Democratic members of the Foreign Affairs Committee took the unusual step of overriding Yatron's seniority and stripping him of his chairmanship because they believed, said the *Almanac of American Politics*, that "Barnes would be a more articulate and more dependable critic of the Reagan policy in Central America." Nothing in Crockett's record that I have just described disqualified him in the eyes of his colleagues.

THE TERM "communist" has disappeared from discourse about not only the domestic scene but increasingly, since Vietnam, about the world as well. During its long struggle for power, the Sandinista National Liberation Front was rarely called communist in major news outlets, and to this day it is rarely so described. The same goes for the FMLN in El Salvador and numerous other guerrilla movements, including the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, once identified by the *Washington Post* as "agrarian reformers." We are reluctant to call any group communist that doesn't call itself that, but even ruling communists often avoid doing so. Of the 18 ruling communist parties, not counting Nicaragua, only eight call themselves communist. The others go by such names as the Polish United Workers Party, the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party, and the like. Communism, in short, is the future that dares not speak its name.

In addition to restoring to our discourse the name of what it is we are against, we need to bring new élan to speaking about what we are for, namely democracy. This is in part because we take it for granted, and in part because it seems too limited or mundane an ideal for passionate devotion. In addition, cultural relativism stops us saying that our ways are best; and cynicism makes us skeptical of what less developed countries can achieve.

But it's wrong to take democracy for granted: its existence has been the exception, not the rule in human affairs, and democracies have perished for want of popular support, as Weimar did. Nor should we view it as an insufficient ideal. Every sundry utopia promises perfection, but it promises what cannot be delivered, and often brings horrors instead. What democracy promises and delivers is to put people's fate in their own hands with a chance for success and happiness. It's about all you can ask of a political system.

And we ought not be reluctant to say that our way, democracy, is indeed best. This is not arrogance because it casts no credit on us. We are not the ones who created American democracy; we are merely its beneficiaries—and it is not arrogance to wish similar blessings upon other peoples. Nor should we be cynical about democracy's prospects, both because democracy has spread, albeit gradually, and because our own democracy rests on the premise that *all* men are endowed with rights that can only be fulfilled through democracy.

FINALLY, we must strive for maximum tolerance within the democratic camp. The differences between liberals and conservatives, between free marketeers, welfare staters, and social democrats, are minuscule compared with the titanic struggle—yes, the Manichaean struggle—between democracy and communism. These disagreements ought to be debated in a manner that is mindful of that sense of scale.

This also applies to disagreements over foreign policy, the realm in which we face our communist foe. I, for one, am generally a hard-liner on foreign and defense issues, but I do not suppose that recognition of the huge moral distinction between democracy and communism makes it axiomatic that a tough policy is the right answer for every question. Hard-liners must bear in mind that it is quite possible for others to favor different policies or tactics without any less patriotism, less love of democracy, or less abhorrence of communism. Conversely, soft-liners must remember that differences within the democratic camp are far smaller than those between it and the communist camp, that they themselves are infinitely closer to the views and values of Ronald Reagan than those of, say, Daniel Ortega. To castigate Reagan and Ortega equally, or worse, to address Ortega as a fellow opponent of Reagan's policies is to risk wandering outside of the democratic camp.

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

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The myth of an airline 'crisis.'

THE SKY ISN'T FALLING

BY GREGG EASTERBROOK

SINCE DEREGULATION, U.S. air travel has become safer and cheaper. The selection of flights and number of destinations served has increased. Airline companies have sacrificed profits in order to keep fares low. People of all social classes, not just big shots, have begun to fly instead of wasting days in cars, buses, and trains. Thousands of jobs have been created.

It's a crisis!

"Something is very wrong in the airline industry"—Senator Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio. "People are just beside themselves"—Senator John Danforth of Missouri. "The totality of the situation is alarming"—James Burnett, National Transportation Safety Board chairman. "The whole industry has a black eye"—Hank Duffy, president of the Air Line Pilots Association. "There's a crisis and every air traveler knows it"—Sally Quinn.

Let's take a look at the crisis. During the eight years before 1978, when air deregulation was enacted by Congress, 1,455 people lost their lives in 38 crashes involving major U.S. airlines. In the nearly nine years since, 960 have died in 26 crashes. The recent Northwest Airline crash at Detroit was the first in two years. Reduced death totals have been recorded despite substantial increases in flights and passengers. About 25 percent more commercial aircraft departures will take place this year than in 1978. Passenger totals will be up by about 60 percent—a projected 450 million, versus 275 million in 1978.

Most airline passengers are now middle-class discretionary flyers, not expense account travelers. At deregulation, 55 percent of airline trips were on the company tab. Today 54 percent are flying at their own expense for personal reasons.

Air delays, which this spring were being painted as some kind of incredible catastrophe that could never be resolved, are already yesterday's story. Percentages of delayed flights have been falling steadily since June. There were 45 percent fewer flight delays in September 1987 than in September 1986. Airport gridlock during the peak summer travel season, widely predicted last spring, never materialized. During several months of recent research on a story for another publication about Texas Air, the Frank Lorenzo holding company that owns Continental and Eastern and is deregulation's leading manifestation, I went out of my way to fly Continental—the airline most notorious for delays—hoping for a horror story to write about. Instead, on 14 Texas Air flights, not a thing went wrong. Rats!

Only ten percent of air travelers pay full fare. Since deregulation, actual fares have increased at about one-half the rate of inflation, meaning air travel has become much cheaper in real terms. Savings to consumers are estimated from $3 billion to $8 billion. About 680 small towns had air service in 1978. More than 800 have it today. Regional airlines serving small towns carried 11.3 million passengers in 1978, 28.4 million in 1986.

The U.S. air transportation system indisputably has problems, among them the need to improve air traffic control, the lack of collision-warning devices in big planes and radar transponders in many small planes, and the need for more and bigger airports. But the sense of crisis in public debate about air travel has been out of proportion.

Consider the numerous recent stories of near-collisions and near-accidents. A few, such as the Delta flight that nearly rammed another airliner over the North Atlantic, have been truly frightening. Most haven't. Part of the reason for increased news of near-collisions is that the Federal Aviation Administration changed the rules for reporting such incidents in 1985. Some near-accident stories are actually about episodes, such as blown tires or severe air pockets, that are hardly fun for passengers, but that have taken place throughout commercial aviation history. Some stories about emergency landings, read carefully, are actually about pilots erring on the side of caution.

A few years ago I was on a New York Air jetliner whose ventilator system began to make oil smoke shortly after takeoff from Boston. The pilot made a series of violent turns to get the plane back on the ground as quickly as possible, fire trucks lining the runway and all that sensational stuff. The next day I searched several major newspapers for any reference to my near-demise. It wasn't reported: there was no air "crisis" in progress then. Had this same event occurred in 1987, we might have made the *CBS Evening News*.

The confluence of many airline near-calamities and no actual ones was frustrating to predictors of deregulated doom. When Northwest 255 crashed in late August, there was morbid excitement in some quarters that months of prophecy had finally come true. When it began to appear the tragedy had been caused by pilot error—nothing that could be blamed on maintenance cutbacks or overworked air traffic controllers—morbid disenchantment set in.

Gregg Easterbrook is a contributing editor of *Newsweek* and the *Atlantic*.

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The End of the Reagan/Bakker/Falwell Era & the Future of Religion

In bygone days, as the Reagan "revolution" and the Christian New Right seemed to sweep all before them, we at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW (an ecumenical monthly edited by lay Catholics) were urged to abandon our independent stance and throw in with the Wave of the Future. We didn't. As circulation took a downturn, we felt like pariahs. But then, popularity isn't everything and we've always been allergic to ideological stampedes. Now that the Conservative Bulldozer, which in Orwellian fashion would defend democracy by destroying it, has run into the ditch, and New Right TV preachers have had their financial shenanigans and moral squalor revealed, we admittedly feel vindicated.

However, the Religious Right will – after licking its wounds – surely be back to strut and bully again, for its power-lust abides. Armed with the bizarre ideology that America is God's Chosen Nation, it still asserts that so-called born-again Christians must "take power" and "run our own country." It's the old Constantinian, theocratic compulsion.

But Jesus didn't promise power and security to his followers. To the contrary, he offered hardship and danger: "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. . . ." The Caesaropapist quest for power is not only alien to America's best traditions, but inimical to authentic Christianity. As Kierkegaard said, "Verily there is that which is more contrary to . . . the very nature of Christianity than any heresy, any schism . . . and that is to *play* Christianity. But precisely in the very same sense that the child plays soldier, it is playing Christianity to take away the danger (Christianly, 'witness' and 'danger' correspond), and in place of this to introduce power (to be a danger for others), worldly goods, advantages, luxurious enjoyment of the most exquisite refinements. . . ."

America's Ayatollah-style Christianity would equate God's cause with a superpatriotic crusade against "Communism," such that one famous New Right preacher hailed the U.S.-sponsored Contra mercenaries as "God's Army." But this is just "playing" Christianity.

Not only is the identification of the faith with American Might idolatrous and self-serving, but it perpetuates the centuries-long scandal of Christendom: Christians blessing privilege and cozying up to Caesar while the world's poor – those the itinerant Jesus loved most – are malignly neglected.

Christians are now at a historical crossroad. We believe it's time to put "Shi' ite" Christianity behind us and return to our Father's business – witnessing to the Gospel, tending to the "least brethren," doing justice, making peace, and loving our neighbors as ourselves. Those who write for us include diverse people like Robert N. Bellah, Walker Percy, Christopher Lasch, J.M. Cameron, Henri J.M. Nouwen, Norman Lear, John Lukacs, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Richard J. Mouw, and Robert Coles.

Newsweek calls us "thoughtful and often cheeky." We bat around the full range of theological, ethical, and social issues, and defy easy pigeonholing. If you're "grossed out" by superficial, saccharine, and self-aggrandizing religion, and are looking for a "face" of Christianity that is spiritually tough, intellectually sharp, and socially responsible, subscribe to the NEW OXFORD REVIEW today!

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What's really behind the "crisis" mindset is that the expense account class, beneficiaries of the old regulated airline system, are furious that their club now admits the unwashed. Air travel, once classy and pleasantly exclusionary, has become a madhouse of screaming kids and stalled queues. Fellow travelers now include white trash, poor blacks and browns, foreign tourists. "Get these riff-raff out of my way" is the tune playing on the subconscious radios of the nation's opinion-makers as they plow a path through the clamor of the contemporary air system.

In recent months nearly every newspaper columnist has delivered himself of a treatise about how his royal person was inconvenienced at an airport. Members of Congress, who fly often, have been especially grumpy. I haven't seen one columnist write about how important discount air fares are to typical Americans for whom small increments of money can mean a great deal. And though Congress is ostensibly the fulcrum of populism, I haven't noticed many congressmen praising the way in which democratization of the air has made it possible for average Americans to vacation on the other side of the country, attend their children's graduations, hurry to the side of ailing loved ones, or experience similar quality-of-life benefits previously reserved for the affluent.

No human being, pauper or saint, enjoys waiting in line or being wedged into a center seat between a portly yahoo and a motormouth grandmother. But people paying from their own pockets usually prefer to exchange such aggravation for cash. Politicians, executives, and journalists who travel on someone else's tab may be in a position to consider empty seats and attentive service more important than saving money. Most Americans do not enjoy that luxury.

MANY ASSUMED at the outset that airline deregulation would bring only moderate changes. This belief stemmed partly from the misconception that airplanes are inherently exorbitant machines that consume vast resources compared with other modes of travel. In fact, for some purposes airplanes are more cost-effective than ground transportation, especially considering that flight requires no road, track, channel, or property right-of-way. Planes need a place to take off and a place to land, but nothing in between. The current estimate is that for trips over 700 miles the actual cost of air travel is lower than the actual cost of taking the bus. And no other form of transportation offers such economy of time. Time does equal money for the business flyer, and it equals convenience for everybody else.

Because it doesn't need a road or track, an airplane is an extremely flexible, market-sensitive form of transportation. When the population increases in the West, the highways and rail lines of the East cannot respond to that trend. But airlines can respond immediately, simply moving their planes. Shackling the inherent flexibility of air travel—by making it extremely difficult for airlines to change routes—was perhaps regulation's greatest inefficiency.

About the only physical drawback to air service is the need for noisy airports. There hasn't been a major new airport in the United States since Dallas-Fort Worth in 1974. Elizabeth Bailey, who was vice president of the Civil Aeronautics Board under President Carter, says that one miscalculation of deregulation was the CAB's assumption that communities would want to expand airports in order to increase local commerce. Instead, community groups have been almost frantic in their opposition to airport construction. And in the age of due process and the impact statement, opponents of development have the legal firepower on their side. Everybody wants the local airport to offer copious cheap flights, ample parking, and spacious terminals. Nobody wants to live under the approach path.

This is a classic "bile barrel" dilemma, the reverse of pork barrel. A pork barrel project is one that benefits a small special group, with the costs spread too thinly to generate strong opposition. With a bile barrel project, the costs are concentrated and the benefits are spread around. Commentators who have been huffing and puffing about the $5 billion surplus in the federal Aviation Trust Fund, set aside for purposes such as airport expansion, may not realize that even if the Reagan administration released this money, many communities might have trouble using it.

AIR DEREGULATION was phased in beginning in 1979. In 1981 the air traffic controllers walked. Because flight restrictions were imposed, the PATCO strike had the effect of covertly re-regulating airlines. The following year brought recession and a downturn in travel demand. Most observers agree that the deregulation era did not commence in earnest until 1984, when—on top of everything else—fuel prices declined and competition took off.

The CAB, founded in 1938, ran the airline industry like a cartel. In the four decades before Congress killed it, not a single major new air carrier was established and not a single pre-existing carrier went out of business. The early years of deregulation saw an explosion of new airlines, but in 1985 start-up carriers started dropping like—let's say, like autumn leaves. Next the airline merge wave began: Northwest bought Republic, TWA took over Ozark, Delta got Western, United acquired Pan Am's Pacific routes, American picked up AirCal, USAir bought PSA and Piedmont, and Texas Air acquired Eastern, People Express, and the assets of Frontier. The only prominent new enterprises to survive were Midway and America West. Nevertheless, that's two more new airlines than the United States had seen in the previous 40 years.

Given the modest profitability of post-regulation airlines—just 1.9 percent, based on sales, in 1986—it wasn't always clear what suitors stood to gain. "Market discipline is missing from the air industry," Andrew Kim, an analyst for the investment firm Eberstadt Fleming, said. "The airframe manufacturers are all over capacity, so they sell at concessionary prices. The airlines do not make a decent return, and yet continue to have access to borrowed capital." Actually what most airlines have been doing looks

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just like what the "industrial policy" gurus have been recommending for the American economy as a whole: sacrificing current profits for future growth; cutting prices to frighten away competition; and, with the sanction of government, forging alliances to acquire market power.

SO FAR the primary effect has been to transfer money from shareholders to consumers, as forgone profits underwrite low fares. But with nearly 94 percent of the U.S. air market now in the hands of eight companies, will matters stay competitive? Shake-outs happen periodically in many industries, and are not necessarily dire. Nor are the failures of start-up airlines necessarily a danger sign, since nearly all new companies in every business category fail. But consolidation does raise the prospect of oligopoly.

Oligopoly probably will not break out on any route served by at least two carriers. United and Continental, for example, each control a little under half of the air traffic at Denver. Competition between them is cutthroat, to the extent that United employees have been known to hang out near Continental ticket counters like the Hare Krishna faithful, enticing travelers to switch. Competition is heated at contested cities because travel is basically a commodity: one seat is more or less as good as another. Since it makes little difference to the consumer who delivers him from Point A to Point B, fares follow the price-matching behavior seen in commodity markets, where any offer announced by one seller is promptly matched by all others.

But when one carrier dominates a hub, market forces become moot. A recent study by Michael Levine, a former CAB official and now Yale professor, found that passengers flying from hubs where there is a dominant carrier pay nearly twice as much per mile as those departing from contested cities.

The Department of Transportation, which has antitrust jurisdiction over airline mergers, has approved every application during the Reagan years. Some of these approvals seem myopic, particularly Northwest-Republic, which created a dominant carrier in Minneapolis-St. Paul and Detroit; and TWA-Ozark, which did likewise in St. Louis. The Justice Department's antitrust division advised against approving the Northwest-Republic and TWA-Ozark mergers, as well as Pan Am's sale of its Pacific routes to United. Former DOT Secretary Elizabeth Dole ignored the recommendation.

"I wish I had more vigorously opposed the Northwest, TWA, and USAir mergers," Alfred Kahn, the CAB chairman who presided over deregulation, now says. "Deregulation of fares and routes was never supposed to mean that government would stop performing its proper functions, such as safety and antitrust enforcement."

In textbook economics there is a powerful check against market domination: any company that raises prices to exploit such domination will entice new competitors into the fray. Advocates of air deregulation believed this would be especially true in a flexible business like the airline industry, where hardy entrepreneurs could easily buy some used airliners on credit and open ticket counters adjacent to any despotic carrier.

In the first few years of deregulation, when many lean and hungry new airlines appeared, this theory seemed sound. But that was before the explosion in air travel began to strain the airport system, raising a tall new barrier to entry: a shortage of "slots," the unofficial but oh-so-important rights to airport landing times and gate positions.

With many major airports now operating well over their intended capacities, new competitors often cannot enter a market unless an existing carrier sells them slots. America West, a growing start-up airline based in Phoenix, has been frustrated on the East Coast by a scarcity of slots for its clean, low-fare planes. In Colorado, United and Continental are dragging their feet against Denver's attempt to build a new airport. The field would increase Denver slots, and though United and Continental have shown no hesitancy about going after each other's throats, both appear damned if they are going to share the action with anyone else.

Without new airport construction, the slot shortage will be an increasingly significant barrier to entry, and will confer windfalls on the companies that happened to be holding them when the music started. In 1986, for instance, Texas Air sold Pan Am a batch of New York, Boston, and Washington slots for $62.8 million. Robert Snedeker, Texas Air's treasurer, has estimated that the company's slot and gate positions at congested airports are worth $2 billion. Like the television and radio licenses handed out by the Federal Communications Commission, the enormous value of airport landing slots is a gift from the government. It derives from no effort on the part of the lucky winners.

ROBERT CRANDALL, president of American Airlines, has suggested national auctioning of slots. This would favor financially secure carriers, of which American is one of the few. Crandall is also the industry's most influential advocate of federal restrictions on the total number of flights, an idea gaining congressional support. Departure ceilings would ease the strain on airports and controllers, but would also, by reducing the supply of seats, spur an immediate increase in fares—something American, traditional favorite of expense account flyers, no doubt calculates would redound in its favor.

Auctioning of slots is a good idea, so long as proceeds go toward financing airport expansion, in order to create more slots and foster competition. How exactly this might be accomplished without unfairly penalizing those carriers like Pan Am that bought their present slots from other carriers, rather than getting them for free, makes a good case study for public policy aficionados, somewhat akin to the puzzle of how to increase cab medallions in Manhattan without clobbering those who paid through the nose for medallions already held.

A variation on the auction idea is price-rationing of peak-time landing rights. Hard as this may seem to believe, most airports charge the same to planes touching down at

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5 p.m. as at 2 a.m. More expensive landing rights (and, therefore, ticket prices) at peak times would create another inducement for passengers to fly off-peak, while improving service for those who feel (or whose companies feel) that peak-hour travel is really worth the added expense. By making better use of current facilities, peak-pricing would alleviate some of the need for new airports.

Even harder to believe, most airports charge fire-sale prices at all hours to private aircraft, encouraging them to gum up the works by arriving at rush hour. Boston's Logan International Airport, for example, assesses private jets $25 to land, and assigns approach clearances on the customary "first come, first served" basis. This means that a Gulfstream jet arriving unannounced with a single corporate plutocrat can get priority over the scheduled arrival of a jumbo jet bearing 300 law-abiding citizens. Forty percent of the runway activity at Logan is generated by private aircraft transporting just five percent of the airport's passengers. The private pilots lobby is a Reagan administration darling, and has managed to torpedo efforts to end such absurdities. Take note, when reading those spooky near-collision reports, that nearly all involve an airliner almost hitting a private plane, not another airliner.

ONE REASON people are upset by the new air ethos is that the pricing systems for discount tickets are so hard to understand. This is a complaint that transcends class distinctions. The dilemma for airlines is that they have two basic types of clientele: business flyers who simply nod their heads when the ticket price is quoted, and discretionary flyers who are avid bargain-hunters. The numerous Saturday-stay, advance-purchase, and cancellation-penalty requirements that airlines impose on discount fares—restrictions consumers believe are dreamed up to harass them—are actually designed to keep the business flyers out of the cheap seats.

Crandall, of American, calls the new binary ticket system "wacko pricing." But however frustrating consumers may find the fine print, restrictions are generally in their interest. Deep-discount deals must be sprinkled with asterisks, or else airlines could not prevent business flyers from taking advantage of them and would end up killing their golden goose. Business flyers whine about wacko pricing, particularly when sitting next to a student or senior citizen flying for a third what they paid. The system, however, helps them as well. Without the new business the discounts bring in, the full-price traveler would have to pay even more.

Frequent flyer plans, a deregulation innovation, were a marketing masterstroke. They build brand loyalty. In the market for business flyers, where the customer usually isn't paying for the ticket, price competition is almost pointless. Frequent flyer plans are, in essence, a bribe to the person who actually decides which airline to fly.

But now that the programs are ubiquitous, they represent a barrier to entry. The flyer who has 50,000 miles built up in TWA or Eastern is simply not going to book America West, even though his employer might save money. There is no practical way to enforce ideas like requiring plan members to declare the value of free flights to the IRS. But the anti-competitive effects of frequent flyer programs are another matter. Here's a second thorny problem where an aspiring economist or lawyer might make a mark by devising a clever solution.

Some congressmen and consumers are uncomfortable with the wacko pricing environment because of the impression, lingering from the days when fares were government-set, that there exists a scientifically objective "correct" fare for a given trip. They say the "rational" way to price air travel would be to multiply the miles covered times a standard figure. This would prevent "discrimination" against travelers bound for small towns, and rectify the supposedly "crazy" present circumstance in which short trips may cost more than long ones.

But why is it unfair that flights to places very few people want to go should cost more than flights to popular destinations that fill planes? Small-town Americans frequently chortle about the suckers in the big cities where prices are out of sight, holding up the rustic way of life as not only spiritually superior but also more sensible financially. Then, when it comes to those aspects of rural existence made more expensive by the lack of crowds, small-towners demand subsidies.

The 1978 deregulation legislation created a program (presently up for legislative renewal) called Essential Air Subsidies, which has sustained air connections to towns off the beaten path, primarily in Alaska. Keeping travel lines open to remote areas of the country is in the general public interest. But there is no public-interest need to subsidize the many small towns a few hours' drive from a decent airport. And as airline hubs proliferate, it becomes ever-easier for commuter lines to carry small-town residents to hubs, where they gain access to the major airline structure. Beyond that, if a small community wants a degree of service that traffic does not justify, nothing stops the town itself from providing the subsidy.

At any rate, charging more for short flights is quite rational. The most expensive moment of an air trip is takeoff. The biggest wasted-motion phase is loading and unloading passengers and luggage. Both takeoff costs and loading time have relatively greater impact on short trips.

One way to look at wacko pricing is as airborne socialism. Previously, all passengers paid the same. Now passengers pay according to their means—business flyers get soaked so that families and senior citizens can enjoy discounts.

DESPITE its cartel arrangement, the regulated airline industry was never terribly profitable. Where was the revenue from the old sky-high fares going? Partly down the drain, wasted on empty seats and inefficient route structures. But mainly to workers, whose raises were simply rolled into the regulated cost base and passed along to the consumer. The prime unions of the airline business are the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), the International Association of Machinists (IAM), and the Association of Flight

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Attendants (AFA). None of them represents members who work under conditions that evoke human sympathy in the way the lives of coal miners or garbage collectors do.

ALPA is an alliance of mostly white males who talk solidarity with a Southern accent. Members average $113,000 a year, the same as U.S. doctors but without the med school debts. ALPA pilots at Eastern, where their contract expires next year, have lately been vocal in asserting that deregulation leads to safety compromises. Lorenzo, who ousted ALPA from Continental, calls this a "fairy tale." I'm not so sure. Interviews with pilots from several airlines convinced me there is cause for concern about maintenance diligence and pressure to make schedules.

On the other hand, ALPA declarations are part bargaining bluster. Texas Air, the carrier unions hate, has never had a crash. The two airlines commonly held up as examples of responsible management, American and Delta, have had crashes since deregulation. American's 1979 Chicago wreck, which killed 275, was caused by shoddy maintenance. Delta's 1985 Dallas accident that killed 133 was approximately half act of God and half poor judgment by the flight crew. When in mid-1987 Delta's ALPA pilots committed a well-publicized series of boneheaded maneuvers such as shutting down engines in midair, their union had little to say on the matter. Had the same errors been made by non-union pilots at Continental, ALPA would have been on the phone to "60 Minutes."

Flight attendants have several unions, of which the AFA is most prominent. Attendants with contracts patterned on AFA provisions enjoy pay and tenure rivaling many white-collar professions. Senior flight attendants at American, for instance, make about $34,000 a year. Airline managers regard attendant work as an entry-level job—no experience required, and a dozen applicants for each opening. Today flight attendants earn less than $20,000 per year at Continental, and draw hourly wages only when a plane is in motion—meaning that if flights are delayed, the attendants are not paid as they sit cooling their heels. Yet Continental is deluged with applications.

IN 1978 it would not have taken a crystal ball to predict that, after inefficiencies in route structures and fares were resolved, the needle would point at airline unions. Labor is the greatest single airline expense, exceeding the cost of airplanes or fuel. (Food, in case you're interested, represents about three percent of costs.) But just as management at many airlines thought it could ignore the likes of Texas Air, labor too spent the early 1980s living in a pre-deregulation dream world. Unions struck Continental just as it was verging on Chapter 11, giving Lorenzo the perfect ammunition to ask bankruptcy courts to abrogate collective bargaining agreements. Labor helped push Braniff and Frontier off the cliff, and weakened United and TWA with hold-my-breath-till-I-turn-blue behavior.

In listing their many grievances against the deregulated environment, air unions always somehow neglect to mention that increased demand for air travel has led to more flights and thus more jobs: 92,000 new jobs since 1978. And though pay has fallen for some job categories at some carriers, across the board airline wages have approximately doubled since deregulation, leaving the typical employee ahead of inflation. So liberals, don't feel guilty about booking a Super Saver fare.

THERE IS an ultimate weapon against a hub-based airline oligopoly—foreign competition. Continental has described itself as "the moral equivalent of Japanese competition." But in principle nothing prevents the real thing, foreign-owned airlines, from offering service within the United States.

Domestic deregulation did not affect international routes, which are governed by a complex of treaties. But other countries have taken deregulation to heart. JAL, British Airways, and KLM are in the process of being privatized. All Nippon Airways, formally restricted to operation within Japan, recently won Japanese government approval to fly internationally, and is aggressively bidding on routes throughout the world. Several foreign carriers now offer originating service at inland U.S. airports such as Dallas, Atlanta, and Orlando. True international competition would arrive if foreign airlines were allowed to move passengers between points within the United States. Though U.S. law currently forbids this, it is no different in principle from Honda building cars in Ohio, or Gulf, Mobil, and Hilton setting up shop the world over.

Negotiations over precursors to such an arrangement are already in progress among various international organizations. Foreign carriers have petitioned the United States for something called "cabotage," or permission to fill seats with domestic passengers on flights that are making multiple domestic stops on their way abroad. U.S. carriers, for their part, have petitioned for what because of old treaty language is called the "fifth freedom." Essentially, this is cabotage involving three countries instead of two. An American flight operating Chicago-London-Frankfurt today cannot sell its second leg to British travelers as passage from London to Frankfurt. With fifth freedom provisions, it could.

Was deregulation good or bad? Good, in every respect except dormant antitrust enforcement and the strain on the traffic control and airport systems. The first failing might be rectified by reviving that golden oldy, the divestiture suit. That is, break up monopoly companies instead of accepting past mergers as a fait accompli. The second failing must be rectified either by a political consensus to build more airports and fund improvements in air traffic control, or by public willingness to accept a restricted supply of airline seats and the higher prices that go with them.

Americans like the idea that everybody else ought be hotly competitive—self-reliant, reacting tirelessly to the winds of the market—but that their own lives should be tranquil and protected by guarantees. Now airline managers and employees have discovered the horrible truth about competition: it's hard work! Airline passengers must likewise face the corollary: you get what you pay for. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Made in Britain

The title is brazen, and after seeing the film, it seems even more brazen, but quite differently so. *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* is not a sex comedy though sex and comedy are in it. Sammy and Rosie, who are married, do get laid several times—by other people—but it's only the very last moment that, as they embrace in tears, there's a suggestion of their going to bed together. Their sexual adventures and their final reunion are a medium through which we see the real subject.

Sammy and Rosie Get Laid
(Cinecom)

That subject is hell. This particular hell is the inner city of London today, chiefly populated by blacks and Asians. The two dominant elements of the film are fire and music. The fires result from a riot after a policeman shoots a black woman; the music comes chiefly from a band of oddly dressed young blacks and whites who wander gently, blissfully, through the streets and the Underground. The surreal effect is of a string of Francis Bacon paintings viewed while listening to ultramod William Blake songs of London.

All of the hell is not about London's troubles as a city. Of those there are plenty, including the eviction of squatters under a motorway by bulldozers while we hear Mrs. Thatcher prattling of harmony. But if the inner city were far more tranquil than it is, the torments in various bosoms would not be much less. Sammy, half Pakistani, is an accountant; Rosie, all English, is a social worker. Of course the place and time in which they live affect them in many ways, but they are in a personal inferno: loving each other and unable to be constant with each other.

Sammy's father, Rafi, a very wealthy factory owner and politician, returns to London from (presumably) Pakistan after an absence of 30 years. He had abandoned Sammy and his mother and had also abandoned Alice, an Englishwoman whom he had loved when he was at university. Rafi is astonished at the neighborhood in which Sammy and Rosie live, even after Sammy says, "If Leonardo da Vinci were alive today, he would live in the inner city." Rafi has come to see his "beloved London" again, to turn over his money to his son, to urge him to have a child, to see Alice again (presumably his wife is dead—his English wife, that is); and also, he confides to Sammy, because he is in fear of his life. Throughout the film he is pursued by a mysterious Asian with one bandaged eye, who first appears as Rafi's taxi driver from the airport and then fades in and out of Rafi's scenes—a phantasmic touch in the midst of urgent realism.

Here I abandon synopsis because it implies smooth, continuous narrative. The texture of *Sammy and Rosie* is quite different. It is a bursting aggregate of counterpoints—the plaiting of six lives, those of Sammy, Rosie, Rafi, Alice, a silky black man called Danny whom Rosie beds in his caravan, and an American photographer called Anna whom Sammy beds in her studio. Two lesbians, one of them Pakistani and the other black, are also prominent. The film's scheme is to keep all these lives going forward at the same time, as far as possible, along with the general life of the inner city. Music, other than that from the musicians on screen, is another counterpoint. After an opening shot of urban squalor, we hear, under the credits, an Edwardian waltz. Under the bulldozing eviction of the squatters, choristers sing a 19th-century hymn.

Rafi is both catalyst and catalyzed in the story. What he causes, what he has previously caused in England and Pakistan, what he ultimately faces about himself make him the film's central figure, so far as it has one. Shashi Kapoor, urbanely irresistible ever since he first appeared in the West in *The Householder* (1963), gives Rafi the charm of a powerful man who enjoys his power and also enjoys putting it aside when he chooses. He makes Rafi so dedicated to his own pleasure that his hedonism is almost winning, a cultivated man (he drops in a line from *Twelfth Night* quite casually) whose culture is part of his easy aggression. Kapoor carries it all off with such reliance on our acceptance of the character that, shaking our heads, we comply. It is only after we learn details of Rafi's homeland cruelties—colonialism after the colonialists left—that his charm fades. Kapoor makes Rafi's eventual collapse almost childlike, a child who doesn't understand why he is disliked for his gluttony because he has in a few ways been generous.

Claire Bloom, always a better actress on screen than on stage, is lavender-scented as Alice, Rafi's early English love who still pines for him. The moment when she opens the door of her semidetached villa and sees him standing there is a jewel. Bloom's petit bourgeois role is just a touch heavily written (she refers to England as "this great land"), but she perfectly embodies dogged gentility, the sort of woman who keeps her robe on while making love.

Wendy Gazelle has only a minimal presence as Anna, but Roland Gift is like mocha cream as Danny (who, for no

FILMS WORTH SEEING

House of Games. David Mamet directs his own screenplay, a seemingly realistic but beautifully abstract drama of visible and invisible deceits. First class. (Reviewed 11/16/87)

Manon of the Spri Concludes forcefully the tale begun in *Jean de Florette*. Yves Montand sinewy and strong. The whole two-part work now stands as a major achievement in sheer storytelling. (11/23/87)

Theme. Exceptional candor and delicacy in this Soviet film about a successful middle-aged playwright and his midlife crisis. Directing and acting of high order. (10/26/87)

Wish You Were Here. A newcomer, Emily Lloyd, comic and caustic as a headstrong teenager who makes trouble for everyone, herself included. An English seaside town, 1951, vividly depicted. (8/3/87)

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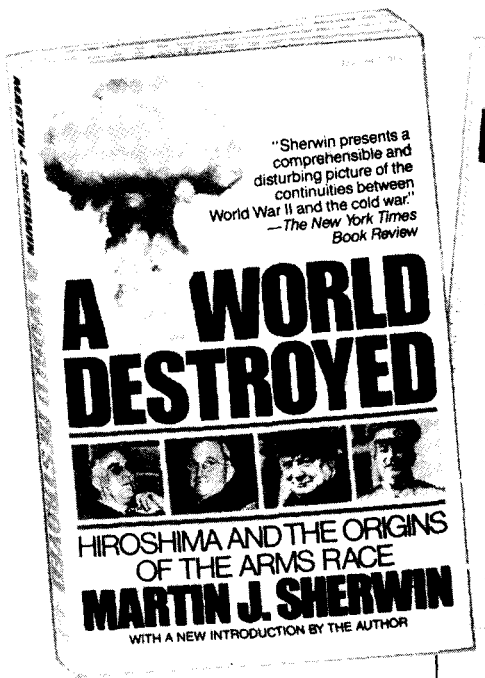
given reason, is nicknamed Victoria). Frances Barber, the Rosie, has gaunt adenoidal good looks and keeps suggesting a desperate search for the primal in a world of fish and chips. Sammy is Ayub Khan Din, himself half Pakistani and half English, who is very appealing in his two schisms—half resentful of and half vulnerable to his father; in love with his wife and yet eager to match her infidelity.

This picture is a co-production of Film Four, the TV channel that is a chief force behind the current English film renewal. One of Film Four's previous productions was *My Beautiful Laundrette*, which was written by Hanif Kureishi, who wrote *Sammy and Rosie*. A few matters are bothersome in his new script. A shot that, because of a street fire reflected in a window, shows Virginia Woolf's photograph seemingly in flames is a bit of italics. So is a shot, after we see three couples making love in different places, in which the screen splits in three horizontally and we get a triple-decker sandwich of amour. The idea of simultaneity and disparity was clear enough without that shot. The hauntings of the one-eyed ghost don't quite integrate with the film, and the downfall of Rafi is not as overwhelmingly dramatized as Kureishi's own material promises. But it's past question that he writes for the screen with a hot proprietary sense that is arresting. "The screen belongs to me," he seems to say. "This is where I work—as I please." He has his own quizzical, humorous, poignant view of injustice and despair. It is possible after only two films to speak of Kureishi characteristics in a way that is rare with screenwriters.

The director was Stephen Frears, who did *Laundrette* and also did *Prick Up Your Ears*. Those films, his first to be shown here (after much serious TV work), promised what *Sammy and Rosie* reveals: a director who fulfills the simplest yet most difficult requirements. He knows what he wants; what he wants is important to us; he knows how to get it. I wouldn't want to scant his long-time editor, Mick Audsley, who must have contributed mightily to the film's jagged polyphony. But it's Frears who has a sure touch for going straight to the cinematic heart of each scene and dispensing with the rest, yet providing material between scenes that enriches as the camera passes, e.g., two black looters posing proudly in front of a fire for a news photographer; a bunch of skinheads bullying some very proper schoolboys. Frears,

THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE

how it began, where it has taken us, and what it will lead to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like Kureishi, emerges as a unique, mordant but humane stylist.

Sammy and Rosie Get Laid is to British social-realist film of the 1960s—for instance, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*—as daring new furniture is to a sturdy old table. The very title of the Frears-Kureishi film marks the difference. That title is right, not because it revels in latter-day permissiveness but because, almost offhandedly, it takes that permissiveness for granted. It seems even better afterward because it signals how much we have won and not won in the last 30 years and because in fact it celebrates obliqueness. A new sidewise sophistication, says the title, is now the best way for art to approach ancient troubles.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

The Longest Journey

At the conclusion of the first part of Peter Brook's monumental production of *The Mahabharata* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's newly renovated Majestic Theater, more than two hours into this nine-hour evening, a dice game occurs that determines the fate of all the characters and causes the great battle of Kurukshetra in which 18 million die. It is one of the few dramatic moments in the entire production. I mean *dramatic* as distinguished from theatrical, for no one could possibly fault Brook for being short on spectacular theatrical values.

In *The Mahabharata*, however, he and his literary colleague, Jean-Claude Carrière, have undertaken the intractable task of reconstituting for the stage a huge Sanskrit epic—approximately 15 times the length of the Bible—and while the effort is noble, it is also doomed. This saga of history, mythology, genealogy, philosophy, and religious dogma is simply too comprehensive, too diffuse, too linear—and ultimately too alien to the Western mind—to find a coherent, arresting dramatic form.

In his useful introduction to the published text, Carrière tells us that "Maha" in Sanksrit means "great" or "complete" while "Bharata" is the name of a legendary clan. Noting "Bharata" also means "Hindu," he translates the title loosely as "The Great History of Man," and, in the opening sequences, the poet Vasya describes what he is about to unfold as "the poetical history of mankind." But "Hindu" does not mean "man" any more than the two warring clans recall any identifiable species from our own history or myth. The play breaks on the brow much the way a demonstration of Hindu Kathakali once struck Brook—as "something mythical and remote, from another culture, nothing to do with my life."

The first 40 minutes of the evening are entirely devoted to pedigrees—an excessively ramified family tree—which is about as enthralling as watching a dramatization of the Book of Genesis, not a single "begat" omitted. After being introduced to the 15 main characters, not to mention at least 30 supernumeraries, and learning how each was ushered into the world (one family sprang from the hundred shattered shards of a huge stone), we remain as estranged from their exotic (and erotic) exploits as from the numerous mythological deities who rule their lives.

Brook and Carrière work hard to universalize this Hindu epic, largely by suggesting that the terrible weapon possessed by the archer Arjuna, as well as one "launched" by his enemy Aswhattaman ("a white heat" that shrivels the earth to ashes), is actually the H-bomb. Brook affirms that the 18 different nationalities gathered together in his cast help "to celebrate a work which only India could have created but which carries echoes for all mankind." But the only universal echoes I could hear were appeals for a sane nuclear policy. At the risk of sounding culture-bound, I'm compelled to say that these well-meaning efforts to erase international and ethnic boundaries—and Brook's work over the past 17 years has been wholly devoted to that worthy goal—have something forced and hortatory about them.

Having wandered through the primitive nations of the earth to see his work performed before African natives, Iranian tribesmen, and Australian aborigines, Brook speaks fervently of a "third culture . . . a culture of links" that he hopes will counteract the fragmentation of the world: "It has to do with the discovery of relationships where such relationships have become submerged and lost—between man and society, between one race and another . . . between categories, languages, genres." This is the voice of the would-be world citizen, speaking through the larynx of a self-appointed international matchmaker.

For years, our most gifted theater artists have been claiming for the stage an evangelical, even apocalyptic purpose in an effort to re-establish its original function as the trunk between God and the polis. First it was the Living Theater, returning from exile to evangelize the nation in the cause of messianic anarchism. Then Grotowski abandoned his experimentation with texts at the Polish Laboratory Theatre in order to engage in "paratheatrical experiments" (people performing yoga, chanting and walking in wide ellipses, chasing the vernal equinox). And, at the same time, Peter Brook was working, with his International Centre of Theatre Research at Les Bouffes du Nord in Paris, to develop a universal language for the stage that would halt its degeneration into an empty bourgeois entertainment. These efforts were informed by honorable, sometimes even heroic, motives. They were also sad evidence of how firmly rooted our theatrical messiahs were in their own cultural topsoil.

The Mahabharata, at least in its New York incarnation, carries this melancholy message throughout its entire nine-hour length. It may be one thing to see it outdoors in Avignon, at ten dollars a ticket, watching the sun rise over the concluding rites. But at $96 a seat, in a production estimated at $6 million, and in a Brooklyn theater renovated at a cost of $5 million in order to replicate the battered and unpatched conditions at Brook's Bouffes du Nord, this costly "poor theater" begins to take on some of the bourgeois grandiosity (despite the atmosphere of feigned seediness) that made Nietzsche rage so rabidly against Wagnerian opera.

It is painful to say this about a production 15 years in the making, but to me *The Mahabharata* demonstrates not so much international harmony and interethnic bonding as the seductions of cultural imperialism. Exquisitely transformed into an Etruscan ruin (and it now may very well be the most beautiful theater in all five boroughs), the Majestic has essentially become an expensive colonial outpost for Peter Brook,

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created and outfitted for his personal use. It also conforms to his personal idiosyncrasies: the newly installed benches are clearly designed for maximum spectator discomfort (in comfortable chairs, he writes elsewhere, "you are in danger of falling asleep"). And what about the nine-hour sit, if you don't opt for three hours on three successive nights? Isn't this a kind of control, an implicit way of forcing homage? I am uncharitably reminded of the anarchist Hugo in O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*, who, while claiming to save the proletariat, unwittingly reveals he wants to be its God.

None of this would mean much if *The Mahabharata* held one truly fast in its grip. But apart from the splendid theatricality (some of it familiar from Brook's previous work with the Royal Shakespeare Company), the evening is a bit of a yawn. Where the director's dedication shows through is in the physical training of the international cast. Like the Living Theater, and like the Polish Laboratory Theatre, these actors are superb-looking creatures and never more impressive than when they are working with their bodies. It is quite another thing when they begin to speak. Difficult as it is to understand the unpronounceable Hindu names (Dhritarashtra, Ghatotkatcha, Djayadratha, Duryodhana), it is even more frustrating to try to identify phrases in a familiar tongue that's foreign to most of the cast.

Some of these performers, like the East German Andrezej Seweryn or the Italian Vittorio Mezzogiorno or the Trinidadian Jeffery Kissoon, succeed in making the dialogue comprehensible (though the Englishman Bruce Myers as Krishna makes us pay for coherence with a display of cuteness). But to watch the legendary Polish Grotowski actor Ryszard Cieslak engage in a losing struggle between the English language and his guttural plosives is to recognize that there are certain cultural barriers that even goodwill cannot overleap.

No, the beauties of the evening are largely visual, starting with Chloé Obolensky's exquisite Oriental costumes—a palette of rich dyes alternating with saffron shifts and bleached robes and Afghan finery—and her deceptively simple setting—the three bare walls of the proscenium, framing a sand pit, a river, and a small pond. Brook is a master of this space and creates startling juxtapositions that always preserve an air of intimacy between actors and spectators. The battle scene, though it goes on too long, is vibrating with crashing bodies and simulated weapons of war. And Brook knows well how to suggest large objects with a simple symbol or prop—a wheel representing a chariot, a red ribbon a gush of blood, a circle of fire the confines of a battlefield.

What falls on the ear, however, is somewhat less propitious. The bizarre Oriental instruments, though beautifully fashioned, make the kind of music you hear in an Indian restaurant between the pappadom and shrimp vindaloo. And the Brook/Carrière dialogue is assertive, flat, prosaic, lacking the poetic resonance that compels attention. As for the story, like the dialogue, it rarely reveals character. An elasticized tale of rivalry between two feuding clans, frequently broken by narrative asides, the play is a long gallop across an endless landscape with no pit stops to develop depth (or to water the horse). It is a surface ride. We are yanked too abruptly from anecdote to anecdote, from story to story, to settle into the characters or care about their fates, which may explain why the epic form is designed for leisurely reading rather than for stage adaptations, how-

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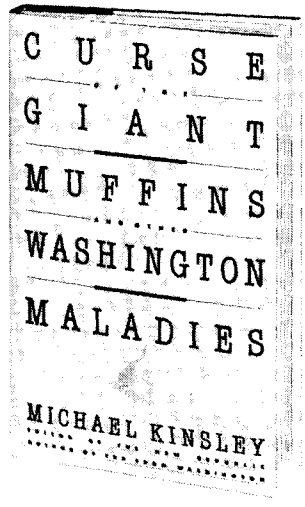

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ever reduced in length. The power of drama lies in compressing events into a nuclear plot whose explosion scatters insights into character and theme. But if plot is the soul of drama, *The Mahabharata* lacks a soul.

It doesn't, however, lack for discussion of the soul. This epic includes within its vast recesses the Bhagavad-Gita, a repository of Indian theology, which the play dispenses in digest form. There is some desultory discussion of *dharma*—an ineffable concept suggesting the road of truth or the order of life (and I won't stick my neck out trying to define it). There are tantalizing references to the way of Krishna and the meaning of death. And the play ends with the saintly Yudishthira, reunited with his dead brothers at a banquet, learning that paradise, like hell, is an illusion. Perhaps it's because these snippets of wisdom are pelted at us so fast that the only coherent theme I could retrieve from the fusillade was Krishna's perception that "no good man is entirely good—no bad man is entirely bad." If that strikes you as profound, so will the play. But those hungry for Hindu philosophy in Western dramatic form would be better off staying home and reading Strindberg's *A Dream Play* or *The Ghost Sonata*.

Would that Peter Brook had produced them! This supremely gifted director has now spent almost a third of his life on projects to which he is superior, whether *Orghast at Persepolis* or *The Ik* or *L'Os* or *Conference of the Birds*. Like *The Mahabharata*, all were inspired less by interest in a text than by a humanitarian sentiment "to establish new relations with different people." The sentiment is moving; the texts are increasingly inflated and hollow. In his new book, *The Shifting Point*, Brook reveals, along with his passion for universal brotherhood, the unmediated love for Shakespeare that informed his earlier triumphs, his penetrating *King Lear*, his irreverent *Midsummer Night's Dream*. How many great plays still await his attention, while he is acting out messianic ambitions and exorcising Western self-hatred. It is a smug and facile thing to offer advice to a master about his future course, and anyone willing to risk error or absurdity in the pursuit of large goals must be respected. Still, I wish the few inspired theater artists in our midst would leave the salvation of the world to the swamis and the gurus, and return to the more achievable, if more humble, task of probing deep dramatic truths.

Rebels without (and with) a cause.

BEATNIKS AND BOLSHEVIKS

BY VASSILY AKSYONOV

IN THE STREAM of insults that Nikita Khrushchev brought down upon us in the winter of 1963, the American word "beatnik" constantly popped up. It's not out of the question that this word attracted the leader's attention because of its somewhat Russian sound. It would be difficult to imagine the leader of progressive mankind insulting young writers and artists with the word "existentialist." Much more likely that he would choose "beatnik"; with a little imagination, it could be construed as an abbreviation of *bitiy chaynik*, or "dented teapot."

I quote myself from *The Burn*, not out of vanity or impudence, but because I haven't been able to imagine the general secretary's perspective more clearly since then:

> The distinguishing marks of a wicked beatnik, "pidarast and apstractionist," were well known to the Boss from descriptions provided by his officials. The wicked beatnik always wore a sweater and glasses, had a little beard, loved noisy "jast music," and laughed at Stalinists. . . . Thus the wicked beatnik will get to our culture, too, and will undermine the very foundations of our culture with his venomous sarcasm. . . . Here he is, the dangerous subversive, the perfidious word spinner who had unlocked the hearts of Soviet youth with the skeleton key of decadence, the leader of the beatnik horde, who had caused clouds to gather over the Socialist Motherland! They must be given a kick in the teeth before it was too late, they must be rooted out; there was already a whiff of smoke in the air that had an uncomfortably Hungarian smell to it.

That is how the Boss envisioned the army of beatnik-revisionists.

Where did this word come from? Who were these beatniks? In 1963 we, meaning those branded with this label, didn't understand it very clearly. It's not inconceivable that Khrushchev knew better who the beatniks were: he had an entire staff of researchers who had access to Western literature. We didn't have a clue. Information gleaned from Soviet magazines was fragmented, although it was carefully amassed, as was everything Western. In the magazine *Foreign Literature* somebody wrote something about James Dean and his movie *Rebel Without A Cause*, to the effect that he was rebelling against bourgeois morality. In the same magazine, or maybe it was in *In Defense of Peace*, mention was made of certain coffeehouses in San Francisco where youngsters in denim (the word "jeans" didn't exist yet) would get together, listen to jazz, read scandalous poetry.

Strangely enough, such news caused me to look not to the West but to the East, to my own hometown in the not-so-distant past. In 1952 a youth commune had come into being in Kazan. Without any idea that beatniks existed elsewhere, we went to Komsomol meetings in deliberately torn sweaters. We met in lairlike apartments, listened to jazz, read scandalous poetry (imitations of the futurists and other "slappers in the face of public taste"). About 15 years later we learned that we had been on the brink of arrest. As the ringleader and the son of famous "enemies of the people," I was especially suspect. The Kazan secret police had collected evidence; we would have tumbled head over heels into the interrogation rooms if Svetlana Alliluyeva's daddy hadn't kicked the bucket.

By the beginning of the '60s, again from articles by various Soviet "Americanists and internationalists," we already knew the names of the San Francisco ringleaders: Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Jack Kerouac, Gregory Corso. Their names sounded like pure silver to Westernizing Russian ears. In fact these writers really didn't have to write anything at all to go over big in Eastern Europe. I remember the girls of Bratislava in 1965 rolling their eyes and tossing their teased hairdos and sighing, "Oh, Gregory Corso." Little did they know that Gregory wasn't into girls.

Generally the American beatniks were older than us by a decade. They were closer to those Soviet writers who were called the "front-line soldiers": Bondarev, Baklanov, Vinokurov, Pozhenyan.

Vassily Aksyonov's most recent book is *In Search of Melancholy Baby* (Random House). This essay was translated from Russian by Bess Powell.

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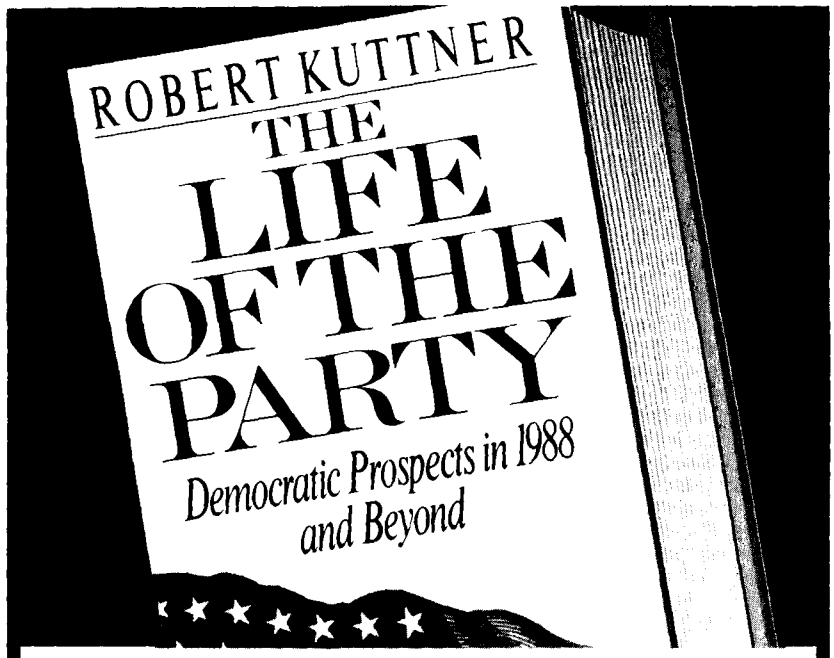
As far as I know, however, none of these American writers took part in the war; and so, when Ginsberg was in Moscow in 1964, he sought the company not of the front-line soldiers, but of our gang. He found it. We gladly hung out with him, because we were interested in finding out who exactly he was.

The sleeve of Ginsberg's jacket was intentionally ripped, just as ours had been when we were teenagers in Kazan. Yet for us he wasn't (and never became) an indisputable apostle of sin and nonconformity. The manner of this 40-year-old struck us as a strange manifestation of infantilism. His revelations (extravagant and constantly inebriated) seemed even more infantile, particularly when he began to attack his own CIA. Still, everybody liked him, maybe even because of his childishness, his gabbing about drugs, his Indian chants. In short, he didn't make an outstanding impression on anyone, and was overshadowed by the "giant" Yevtushenko. We were quite surprised to learn of his incredible success in Prague, where crowds of youngsters trailed him and he was chosen king of the spring holiday.

THE OFFICIAL Soviet view of the American beatniks was very amusing. They were sort of OK, on the one hand, as shakers of the foundations of bourgeois society, and as promoters of our cause. On the other hand, they expressed merely a petit bourgeois protest, that is, they didn't promote our cause enough, they even distracted youngsters from the social struggle. In any event, at least some grains of their work began to appear in the Soviet press at the time of the "first thaw" in 1962—first, excerpts from Ginsberg's famous poem "Howl," with a preface about five times the length of the excerpts themselves, then excerpts from Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road*.

The Soviet view turns out to be a curious mirror image of an American view, or so I recently learned from an article by the American conservative (excuse me, neoconservative) Norman Podhoretz. It seems that the town council of Lowell, Massachusetts, Jack Kerouac's hometown, decided to create a monument in Kerouac's memory. This decision came as an unpleasant surprise to the neoconservative. Podhoretz questioned whether Kerouac actually brought any good to his hometown, whether he didn't actually mock the way of life of towns like Lowell, whether he didn't in fact consider life in a place like Lowell a form of spiritual death. According to Podhoretz, Kerouac's principal virtue was that toward the close of his life (which was ended by booze in 1969, when he was 47) he settled down and turned to the right politically. Alas, sighs Podhoretz, he's not remembered for that.

Kerouac is too wild for American neoconservatives and for Soviet commissars. He believed that only people outside the system can be considered alive: the loafers, the cheats, the bag people, the prostitutes, and those who were lucky enough to be born with dark skin. Podhoretz adduces an eloquent passage from *On the Road* that glorifies the "mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow Roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars." But Podhoretz doesn't consider Kerouac a great writer; he couldn't create memorable images or spin gripping stories. This is how the neoconservative estimates literary greatness. Note that if you were to judge literature according to Podhoretz's standard, the number of "great writers" doesn't decrease, it increases.



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Of course, Kerouac produced not literary works, strictly speaking, but highly charged, narcissistic monologues of the type that Ginsberg came to call "spontaneous prasods of bop." They were formless and disconnected, and should be judged not from the standpoint of literary merit but socially, as the expression of a rebellious generation. About this Podhoretz is essentially right. He is also right to observe that in a short time the very anti-values that the beatniks raised against the Middle-American Establishment were elevated and accepted as the "orthodox dogma" of the counterculture.

But Podhoretz pays attention only to the destructive nature of the beat movement. He holds Ginsberg's collected poems at arm's length and with two fingers, as if it were a dead iguana, because it may corrupt a new generation. "All in all," he writes, "Kerouac and Ginsberg at one time played a great role in the destruction of a great number of young lives, having influenced youth with their aversion to the norm and to general decency." He begins to speak almost the same language as Khrushchev. Finally the beat finds himself in the middle ground.

THERE WERE chronological coincidences and hasty parallels between the Western beat movement and the Soviet "New Wave," as two Danish scholars, Inger Lauridsen and Per Dalgaard, have noted. The '50s, in both the United States and the Soviet Union, were considered boring, materialistic, and conformist, whereas the '60s were the decade of protest. In the '60s, as these scholars explain it, the standard of living in the Soviet Union improved, televisions and telephones were made available to the masses, the growing middle class began to drive around in their little *ladas* (which are baby *zhigulis*). There was freer access to the classics and to Western literature, and it was easier to travel around the country and even around the bloc.

These scholars also note that the subculture of the '50s set the stage for the outburst of a powerful "counterculture" of the '60s, as it did in the West. Taking advantage of the liberal atmosphere of the "thaw," the young subculture in the big cities of the Soviet Union seized the chance to express itself in poetry, prose, music, and the visual arts. All of this became the "New Wave."

Our Danish scholars correlate American beats with their Russian counterparts. *Americans*: Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, William Burroughs, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Gary Snyder, Michael McClure, and so on; *Russians*: Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Andrey Voznesensky, Bella Akhmadulina, Vassily Aksyonov, Anatoly Gladilin, Bulat Okudzhava, Andrey Bitov, Vladimir Vysotsky, Ernst Neizvestny, Andrey Tarkovsky. Both groups, they say, spoke for the generations that experienced the horrors of war, and of "cold war," generations keenly alive to the possibility of nuclear destruction. Both represented generations that were fed up with manipulation by synonymous capitalist and communist societies, and that yearned for a romantic, anarchic revolt against their societies. Both denied the importance of the state and public institutions, emphasizing instead the importance of inner freedom. These generations, East and West, insisted on the importance of one's own path in life, whatever it may be—drinking, traveling, smoking, jazz, making love, talking about Buddha or Jesus, and so on.

SUCH COMPARISONS, however, provoke this member of one of the groups. The comparisons work only if you don't take into account events such as the Hungarian counterrevolution and the workers riot in Novocherkassk in 1960—that is, if you overlook the fact that by the beginning of that happy decade of the '60s the liberation movement in the Soviet bloc was already history. The point is, we're talking about different types of freedom.

What kind of horrors of war did the American beatniks experience if none of them served in the army, if none took part in military action against Germany and Japan? The majority of those listed in the Russian group also did not participate in any military action, with the exception of Okudzhava and Neizvestny. But we did experience bombings, evacuations, starvation. I doubt that the American beatniks experienced even an interruption in their supply of Coca-Cola. One more point about the war: despite its horrors, it was a source of great inspiration for Russians. The war brought a feeling of spiritual community to Soviet people for the first time, an understanding that people could unite not only out of common fear but also in a struggle for human dignity.

The real horror that our generation experienced came not in the form of the war, but in the form of Stalinism. Parents or close relatives of all the above-mentioned Russians went through torture chambers, prisons, or camps. Overcoming that terror is what fundamentally distinguishes us from our American counterparts. They were fortunate not to have known such things; but as long as we're on the subject, it's not out of place to remind those who bring up McCarthyism that the senator's committee didn't destroy a hundredth of the number of lives that our "organs" put away in a single day.

AS FOR the "cold war," you could also say that the two groups had different psychological approaches. The Western rebels thought that their government created all kinds of NATO-like organizations out of purely militaristic motives, or to undermine the trust between nations. It was obvious to the majority in our group (and maybe even to all, in the depth of the soul) that the issue was really one of opposition to total perfidy, or, if you please, to the "class approach." The "cold war" not only brought an end to the "hot war"; it also codified a conception of democracy.

Capitalist and communist societies didn't look nearly so synonymous to us. And we were less anarchistic than our hirsute and often tunic-clad Western brothers. We drank more, they smoked more, and none of our group happened to be gay (or as we say, joined the ranks of the "blue division"). As for jeans: the beatniks started to wear them as a symbol of rejection of Western society, but we wore them for exactly the opposite reason, to demonstrate our allegiance to Western society. Anyway we were less into fashion. We took talk about Christ more seriously; we were also very interested in books by émigré Russian religious philosophers, which suddenly were made available to us. The American beatniks were not exposed to the same level of repression that we were; some of us, myself included, were forced out of our own country.

We felt a certain closeness to these people who had given their establishment the finger, because we wanted to do the same to our establishment. But just as their establishment was different from ours, so was our giving it the finger. The problems that the American beatniks grappled with in the 1950s had been addressed by the young geniuses of Russia's Silver Age in the 1910s. The Americans' search for open forms was a forward movement, but for us that search was in many ways a backward movement, to

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the smothered but not completely annihilated Russian avant-garde.

At the end of the '50s and the beginning of the '60s, we opened the literary warehouse that the Stalinist bastards had nailed shut. We extracted Khlebnikov, Mandelstam, Bely, Platonov, Oberiuti . . . there was no end to the treasures of our recent past. The influence of this rediscovered avant-garde, this art of yesterday (sometimes we even thought of these people as our older brothers), was much stronger than any Western influences, even Hemingway. The American beatniks had a revolutionary position and tried to break a specific tie. Although our "wave" did break with socialist realism, we did it with such disdain that we didn't consider it much of a break; our main concern, the pathos of our movement, was the restoration of a tie, the attempt to mend the broken chain of our avant-garde tradition.

THE DELIBERATE departure from politically significant themes: that is what finally distinguished our development from the beatniks'. Needless to say, all Western types of liberation struck us as whimsy; but we shunned our own democratic movement too, which gave rise to talk about our own conformity. Only later, when the repression gained strength, was there a schism among us: some of the New Wave joined the domestic rights campaign, others supported Western pacifism and blamed the West for the neutron bomb. (Imagine the courage required for that!)

As the great Bella Akhmadulina has said:

> I believe that a poet cannot be political—not in the literal sense. But a poet doesn't exist in a vacuum. Events do concern you; you are a part of them anyway. There comes a time when you have to say yes or no. That can be very hard. You have to heed your conscience, which at some point may say: "I can't go on like this" or "I fear God's grace will be taken from me." Talent—that is, the grace of God—is connected, alas, with the grace of external circumstances. Often those poets who are most favored by God are least favored by circumstances. The longer I live, the better I understand that I had to head in my own direction, that I had to leave the group. I'm glad that we were once a group, and glad that we now exist individually, each on his own path. God grant us all success.

We're older now, and it's harder to talk about groups and movements without a little humor. Some of our crowd are gone. Vysotsky left behind a cult following unprecedented in the history of Russian poetry. Tarkovsky left behind a shrill note of artistic perfection. Gladilin rode the wave of Jewish emigration. Yevtushenko and Voznesensky are major champions of Gorbachev's *glasnost* . . . Lord, enlighten me. These things we call generations, are they random? Or will we settle, finally, with our friends, in a faraway gathering of souls?

RANKING GENERALS

The Mask of Command
by John Keegan

(Viking, 368 pp., $18.95)

The British army, now very professional, was burdened by a great many mediocrities among its officers during the interwar years, because of the special tolerance extended to good horsemen. Even the gunners of the field artillery became horsemad during the 1920s, no doubt the better to suppress the dreadful realities of mechanical warfare. A man might never have mastered the simplest tactics, and be sadly ignorant of much that an officer was supposed to know, but he might do very well in the regiment because "he rode like an angel."

John Keegan writes like an angel. His style is bold, and unsubdued by convention. Felicitously he breaks rules that mean-spirited editors would impose in slavish obedience to the manuals. Keegan deliberately repeats words in close proximity, for emphasis; he deftly alternates phrases only a few syllables short with those a full paragraph long, giving a rhythmic, almost musical quality to his prose; and he mingles obsolete or constructed words with common slang ("Alexander was thus impropriated of almost half the Persian empire, a cool return on 18 months' campaigning"). All this yields a highly textured language, to which he adds the vibrant coloring of a full palette of adjectives, often highly emotive. And that is what Keegan's writings are all about, the raging emotions of the "passionate drama" of battles, to the exclusion of the logic and the meaning of wars.

Keegan's first book, the widely read *The Face of Battle*, was not at all diminished by his preoccupation with the emotions of combat, rather than with its modalities and its purposes, for the emotions were precisely his announced subject. The collage of extracts from the writings of sensitive souls exposed to battle, embedded in a text beautifully written and certainly informative, fully achieved its purpose and deserved its acclaim. Moreover, Keegan was the beneficiary of the political approval that persons of letters generally offer to all variations of the "war-is-hell" theme in any medium, as if condemnation were a remedy in itself. That Keegan was himself a military person in some sense, if only because he was a teacher at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, naturally guaranteed an additional measure of such approval.

Unfortunately Keegan has not been content to be a litterateur of war. He has striven to write military history too, in this instance on the subject of command in war, of generalship. Of the methods of social science, Keegan writes that they "condemn those who practice them to the agony of making universal and general what is stubbornly local and particular." He then declares that "I am a historian, not a social scientist, and am therefore free to believe that the generalship of one age and place may not at all resemble that of another." But to write only of the local and the particular is not at all the historian's task; it the antiquarian's and the chronicler's. History, strictly conceived, is distinguished precisely by the urge to explain; and the finding of historical causes requires comparisons and generalizations, even if they are very rarely of universal scope.

If we say, for example, that Napoleon's campaign of 1812 was defeated by the sheer geographic depth of Russia, we imply a theory of geographic overextension that need not be, indeed is not, universally valid, but that is sufficiently general to explain many other defeats as

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well. And we certainly imply a comparison with other Napoleonic campaigns against shallower countries, or against an imagined Russia identical in every way to the real Russia but smaller. In whatever form, then, historical explanation must transcend the local and the particular. In this respect, good historians are no different from good social scientists, and the "agony" that Keegan imagines ("strain" would have been too pale a word for him) afflicts only the crudely mechanistic among the social scientists.

THE HISTORICAL evolution of command in war is a subject worthy of attention, and it could easily attract the interest of a wide readership. There is an excellent book on the subject, Martin Van Creveld's *Command in War*. But Keegan has abjured systematic analysis, and what is left is his retelling of familiar stories, his account of selected Great Captains: Alexander, Wellington, Grant, and Hitler (as the Bad Captain). There are fragments of a theory of command in the book, but not enough to justify the unity of the work.

Fragment One is the claim that the hero appears only when combat is organized. "Primitive warriordom," Keegan informs us, "required that all behave identically." Hence there could only be "proto-heroes," that is, figures who distinguish themselves by assuming greater risks, but who do not otherwise influence the course of the fighting. Readers of Homer will be surprised by this distinction. There was tactical uniformity before Troy, yet there was much scope for the hero; and he could indeed affect the fighting, he could affect even the strategic conduct of war.

Fragment Two is Keegan's explanation of his book's title:

> Heroic leadership—any leadership—is . . . a matter of externals almost as much as of internalities. . . . In no exceptional human being will [the theatrical impulse] be stronger than in the man who must carry forward others to the risk of their lives. What they know of him must be what they hope and require. What they should not know of him must be concealed at all costs. The leader of men in warfare can show himself to his followers only through a mask. . . . What follows is an attempt, across time and place, to penetrate the mask of command.

True, heroic war leaders present the self by means of artifice. But so do "any leaders," as Keegan admits; so do nonleaders, so do you and I. There is no different and specific "mask of command"

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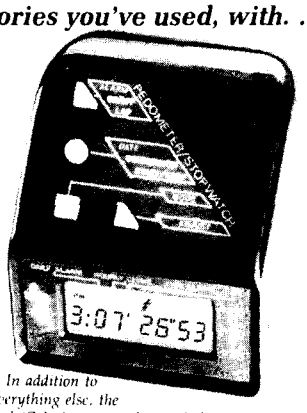

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to be penetrated. What there is, by contrast, is the phenomenon of generalship, which is "penetrated" by studying the business of generals—which happens to be the translation of the Greek term from which our "strategy" is derived.

Finally Keegan is not interested in anything systematic; and his selection of Alexander, Wellington, Grant, and Hitler remains arbitrary. His book is a florilegium, which could have featured any other set of war leaders. What Keegan does give us, however, is his sound understanding of many particulars, and as always his angelic prose. But even the book's strengths are vitiated by the absence of a sustained comparative analysis, and more disturbingly, by an absence of sources, which are a basic requirement of scholarship. Keegan's book comes to us full of unattributed quotations and undocumented claims. He may not be the guilty party: publishers regularly do their bit to promote the advancing Dark Age by blackmailing authors into doing without.

CONSIDER Keegan's treatment of Alexander, which is crippled by his lack of documentation. For the Greeks, Alexander the Great was the phenomenal figure of antiquity, the young master of a provincial mountain kingdom who miraculously defeated the immense Persian empire and left its lands partitioned among his followers after an incursion that reached the remoteness of India. The Persian empire, the only superpower of its age, was unique in controlling both the Egyptian and the Mesopotamian irrigation cultures, as well as the Iranian plateau. From that formidable base, its power reached Anatolia on one side and the northwest edge of the Indian subcontinent on the other. Ionian Greeks were thus ruled by the Persians, and ever since the attempted invasion of Xerxes in 480 B.C. the rest of Greece survived under the ever-present threat of a further Persian advance.

Alexander's victory placed him immediately in the pantheon of hero-gods that figured so prominently in the consciousness of the Greeks; he was a real-life Herakles, a much greater Achilles. And the Romans, during their rise to empire, made even more of him than the Greeks did in decline. He was widely worshiped as a god in sanctuaries all over the Roman empire. (Caesar wept for his own mediocrity before an Alexander-image in Cadiz.) The reach of his fame is recorded by the permutations of his name—Alexander, Iskander, Secunder may still be found from North Africa to central India.

Such a figure is the stuff of legends and mythography; each of the surviving ancient biographies contains much of suspect authenticity. It follows that the modern military historian must exercise great care in choosing which surviving text to follow, and must make the fullest use of the vast array of specialized literature on the subject. Instead, in a throwback to an earlier age of narrative entertainments, Keegan relies uncritically on the most accessible sources; he seems unaware that Curtius and Arrian were writing 400 years and more after the death of their subject, in a time innocent of tape recorders. Thus we hear Alexander say that "I should feel ashamed after crossing the sea from Europe to Asia so easily if this little stream should hinder us . . ." and much more of the same viva voce. Keegan relies heavily on the speeches of exhortation in those ancient texts, but they are set pieces, artifacts of literary convention, designed not to record what Alexander might or might not have said, but to serve as the vehicles of appropriately elevated sentiments, of authorial arguments.

Thus Keegan's Alexander is a literary, not a historical, construct, on which no reliable judgment can be based. Certainly Keegan's sweeping condemnation is false: "He destroyed much and created little or nothing. The Persian empire, a force for order in the ancient world, to summarize its function at its lowest, did not survive the Alexandria conquest. Within a generation of his death, it had been torn to pieces by the quarrels of his successors, the Diadochi." Indeed, it is nonsense. Alexander's achievement, as the Greeks understood it, that is, in cultural terms, was distinguished precisely by its extraordinary persistence. After his conquest, Egypt and the Levant were Hellenized, and remained Hellenized for almost a thousand years. Egyptian rents sustained not only the luxuries of Cleopatra and her Macedonian ancestors but also the comprehensive bibliographic program that preserved for us the written inheritance of classical Greece.

COMPARED WITH Alexander, Wellington is virtually a contemporary; his memory lingers in the regiments of the British army almost as if he were the last colonel but one. Wellington too left his mark on places as widely separated as Spain and Tamil Nadu. (I once lectured at Wellington, in the remote Nigilri Hills.) Still, his career, if certainly legendary, is not quite obscured by myth. There exists ample and very detailed documentation. Hence the reader who relies on Keegan for his Wellington is in no danger of being misinformed; in this instance the lack of scholarly procedure is entirely harmless, given the author's intimate knowledge of the subject. Keegan offers a convincing explanation of Wellington's method of command, which he describes as a mixture of efficient management and tactical leadership.

Keegan ably reviews the travails of generalship in that age of residual aristocratic influence (Wellington had much trouble with the chinless wonders foisted upon him), and also the broader circumstances of contemporary warfare, tactical and logistic, operational and strategic. He wants us to see Wellington and Alexander as opposites (the one a heroic leader, the other an anti-hero), though there is not much in the contrast. What emerges instead is simply Wellington's competence, and his attention to tactical detail (the ridge so carefully chosen at Waterloo). These sufficed to best Napoleon, probably the most competent human being who ever lived, albeit when he was fatally weakened by prior defeats as well as painful illness. As always with Keegan, the focus is on Wellington's emotions as a leader of men. Wellington is given as an admixture of almost Victorian sentimentality (though he was not so ready to weep as Churchill, that truer Victorian) and sardonic reserve. Keegan concludes his excellent portrait by citing Wellington's famous rejoinder. Asked if he was pleased by the ecstatic acclaim of the Bruxellois after Waterloo, he replied, "Not in the least; if I had failed, they would have shot me."

AFTER A BAD Alexander and a cameo Wellington, Keegan tackles Ulysses S. Grant's epic career from shopkeeper in Galena, Illinois, to the command of the Union armies on the threshold of the presidency. Much of what Keegan writes is interesting, and far more instructive than the mannered antiquarianism of, say, Bruce Catton; but it is finally repetitive of fuller works. The justification for his 60 pages on Grant must be in his comparison of Grant to the other three, but here too Keegan fails at the task that he himself virtually abjures.

Of Keegan's Hitler, the less said the better. In 1987 the reader is entitled to a

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better version of that cataclysmic figure than a 1950s-style criticism of his military practices, already fully defined (indeed, grossly exaggerated) in German military memoirs. The man who understood the potential of the armored blitzkrieg, the mode of warfare that remains the basis of current military practice in continental settings, much earlier than most of his generals deserves a more rounded appraisal than Keegan's imitative condemnations.

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK

Edward N. Luttwak is the author most recently of *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Harvard University Press).

THE WANDERER'S WISDOM

The Songlines
by Bruce Chatwin

(Viking/Elisabeth Sifton Books, 293 pp., $18.95)

Too many years have separated the publication of Bruce Chatwin's third book, the novel *On the Black Hill*, and his latest work, *The Songlines*. Although it is dubbed a novel (V. S. Naipaul recently employed the same slightly unsatisfactory strategy in *The Enigma of Arrival*), *The Songlines* is really part travel book, part meditation on the idea of nomadism, part collection (in the sections Chatwin calls "the moleskin notebooks") of the random quotes, diary entries, and observations that have consoled Chatwin, or invigorated him, or, perhaps, egged him on in his travels over the last 20 years.

Walter Benjamin once said that the ideal book would be one entirely made up of quotations, and it seems that Chatwin (who includes the remark in *The Songlines*) was at least tempted by the idea of making such a book. Though the notes are, inevitably, somewhat incidental to the story he has to tell, they offer an extraordinary, unparalleled map of Chatwin's own sensibility as a writer. *The Songlines* is remarkable, among many other reasons, for its exposed quality, and Chatwin sometimes appears within it, as Hume said of Rousseau, like a man without his skin on. This is not to say that *The Songlines* is a failure as a work of storytelling. To the contrary, it is certainly Chatwin's best book since *In Patagonia*, and perhaps the most interesting work—though in what genre I am not sure—to be published this year. At the same time, *The Songlines* is a troubling book; one reads it with fascination, but finally with growing moral discomfort.

Chatwin has enjoyed a charmed career. From the moment he burst on the scene with *In Patagonia*, the public in both England and America has hung on each of his books with an impatience that has been entirely justified, without, for all that, being any less uncritical. The English writer Andrew Harvey has remarked that most writers of his generation not only admire Chatwin desperately, but actually wanted to be him at one point or another in their careers. The reason for Chatwin's special position, I think, is that his work has filled a gigantic void. For, if the present moment is a relatively happy one for poetry in the English language, it is a puzzling, curiously rudderless period for works of non-fiction, and a downright rotten period for fiction itself.

Most new writing, however gloriously burnished it may be technically, has come to seem stale and conformist within a remarkably short time. The various "schools" that dominate writing today are easily identifiable, but most of the writers who adhere to them are all but indistinguishable. One almost feels they should be considered only plurally, rather like the nomadic Aboriginal storytellers of Central Australia who figure prominently in *The Songlines*. It is a sorry situation; and within it, Chatwin's intransigent, idiosyncratic, and beautiful books naturally seem to belong almost to a different, superior branch of the writer's art.

That said, the fact that so many people admire Chatwin's work in this unreserved, exuberant way is not merely the inevitable inflation of honors that occurs in any barren time. It should be remembered too that *In Patagonia* quite simply revived travel writing from the genteel, philistine slumber in which the genre had reposed since the great days of Lawrence, Waugh, and Robert Byron. Chatwin did many things well in *In Patagonia*, but the most wondrous thing of all was his restoration to the travel form of a measure of essential, inescapable pain—the pain of the writer who is doing the seeing and the pain of what is being seen and imagined—without which travel writing has been little more than the amusing jottings of high-strung, well-born Englishmen about the more obscure places of the world.

In one of the entries in the "moleskin notebooks," Chatwin notes approvingly that travel can be identified as the "same word as 'travail'—'bodily or mental labor,' 'toil, especially of a painful or oppressive nature,' 'exertion,' 'hardship,' 'suffering.' A 'journey.' " This is not hyperbole, for what distinguishes Chatwin's travel writing, and marks it as the equal of such masterpieces of the form as Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia* and Byron's *The Road To Oxiana*, is precisely the agonistic sharpness of its vision, its elegant remorselessness, and the melancholy sinuousness of its hard-won ironies.

Of course, Chatwin succeeds only by excluding a great deal from his angle of vision. There is nothing wrong with that: there have been very few great writers who have written well about more than a few subjects, or have been capable of transcending their own obsessions. In Chatwin's case, there has been a particular need to keep away from anything that smacks of the overpopulated, cacophonous life of modern cities, and indeed, of the modern world itself, at least as most people experience it. Thus, in *In Patagonia*, Chatwin has no sooner arrived in the hysterical Buenos Aires of Isabel Perón then he immediately abandons it for the lonely, inspiriting peculiarities of Argentina's deep south.

But Chatwin is not uninterested in history. He is in fact a great narrator of historical *faits divers*. The chapters on the anarchists of Patagonia are as brilliant as Hugo, and probably as fictional. But how typical of Chatwin to be so interested in 1900 and so indifferent to his own time. Even in *The Viceroy of Ouidah*, an extraordinary short novel about a Brazilian slaver in 19th-century Dahomey (and, to a considerable extent, about modern postcolonial Africa), Chatwin is fundamentally concerned with the exploits and the dramas of a king, a court, and, natu-

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rally, of the fate of his protagonist, Da Silva. Though the book shrieks with the cries of the dead, it is finally as underpopulated as the cast of a Greek tragedy in which the families are real and the crowds are all but imaginary.

In *On the Black Hill*, Chatwin barely chooses to bring his two characters, twin brothers who farm on the Welsh borders, out of the house they share for their entire lives. Chatwin has observed ironically that he wrote the book in part as an answer to those critics who said he was a "mere" travel writer. *On the Black Hill* is remarkable in that it is a book where nobody travels anywhere, but it shares with Chatwin's other books a peculiar, marmoreal spaciousness, and an implacable disdain for the modern world. Though he never expresses the thought overtly anywhere in his first three books, it is perfectly obvious that the modern world does little but repel and depress Chatwin. The comparison with Naipaul is plain. But unlike Naipaul, whose subject is more and more his own despair at the course of the postcolonial world, Chatwin has preferred to avoid the subject entirely.

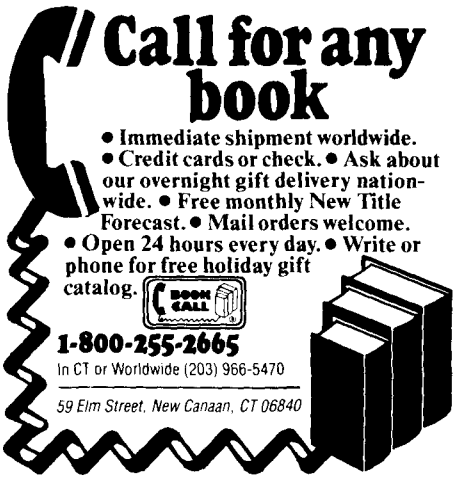
THE SONGLINES is not just a book drunk on the idea of nomadism and the nomadic life, it is a book that all but asserts that nomadism is the only sane life people may live. "*Solvitur ambulando*," Chatwin notes in *The Songlines*, "it is solved by walking"; and later, "I felt the Songlines were not necessarily an Australian phenomenon, but universal; that they were the means by which man marked out his territory, and so organized his social life. All other successive systems were variants—or perversions—of the original." The greatest perversion of all, Chatwin suggests over and over, is the sedentary life: that is the life of most people on the earth.

Small wonder that Chatwin's Australia is the alternately sublime and brutish country of the Central Australian Outback, rather than the cluttered coastal regions of that continent where cities and suburbs sprawl and expand, and in which the overwhelming majority of Australians, whether they are the descendants of transported convicts or newly arrived Vietnamese refugees, make their homes and lives. It is not that the reader wants Chatwin to describe Sydney or Melbourne, anymore than it would be reasonable to expect Naipaul to write an irenic travel book about the Caribbean. Rather, what discomfits is that Chatwin seems to feel that only those who lead nomadic lives can be decent people. Everyone else is presented as a monster, a fraud, or a boob.

CHATWIN'S HERO, Arkady Volchok, is the noble white nomad, *sans peur et sans reproche*. *The Songlines* begins with Chatwin meeting him, and largely sets the ground for all that follows:

> In Alice Springs—a grid of scorching streets where men in long white socks were forever getting in and out of Land Cruisers—I met a Russian who was mapping the sacred sites of the Aboriginals.
>
> His name was Arkady Volchok. He was an Australian citizen. He was thirty-three years old. . . .
>
> Nothing in Arkady's temperament predisposed him to live in the hugger-mugger of Anglo-Saxon suburbia or take a conventional job. He had a flattish face and a gentle smile, and he moved through the bright Australian spaces with the ease of his footloose forbears.
>
> His hair was thick and straight, the color of straw. His lips had cracked in the heat. He did not have the drawn-in lips of so many white Australians in the Outback; nor did he swallow his words. He rolled his r's in a very Russian way. Only when you came up close did you realize how big his bones were.
>
> He had married, he told me, and had a daughter of six. Yet preferring solitude to domestic chaos, he no longer lived with his wife. He had a few possessions apart from a harpsichord and a shelf of books.
>
> He was a tireless bushwalker. He thought nothing of setting out, with a water-flask and a few bites of food, for a hundred-mile walk across the Ranges. Then he would come home, out of the heat and light, and draw the curtains, and play the music of Buxtehude and Bach on the harpsichord. Their orderly progression, he said, conformed to the contours of the Central Australian landscape.

The passage is breathtaking. Few writers can incarnate a place with such effortless economy; and one feels that Volchok, in six lapidary paragraphs, is a character as real as any in literature. And yet there is something terribly wrong, even unworthy, about what Chatwin is up to. His hero is a man who has abandoned his daughter in favor of hundred-mile bush walks (with only a few bites of food—if he carried a full pack he would no longer be a hero), on the face of things scarcely a noble exchange. And while Volchok's possessions are few and his life is ascetic, he has perfect possessions (books and musical instruments) and perfect taste. Imagine for a moment that Volchok liked to return after his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hike, crack open a beer, and watch a game show. No, it's Buxtehude or bust.

As one reads *The Songlines*, one feels increasingly queasy about the adamantine aestheticization that Chatwin uses as a yardstick for judging people and phenomena. The beautiful, the elegant, and the ascetic are good; the fat, the indelicate, and the sedentary are bad. In the end Chatwin's extraordinary achievement as a storyteller seems tainted by assumptions that would better have been left to people like Leni Riefenstahl.

As the book unfolds, there is no letup in this aestheticizing. We meet a few other white nomads, associates of Arkady's in the Aboriginal rights movement, who are subtle, and therefore OK. We also meet hermits such as the Marxist Hanlon, who denounces Chatwin, in a brilliant section, as a snobby Pom, yet weeps when Arkady and Chatwin get up to leave. There is also Rolf Niehart, who runs a general store in the tiny settlement of Cullen while living in a caravan bursting with books in a half dozen languages and copies of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* and the *New York Review of Books*. (Surely only Chatwin could find such a person.) What unites these people, and Chatwin describes them with a marvelous combination of tough-minded accuracy and affection, is their originality, their contempt for authority (synonymous, in *The Songlines*, with the whites intent on cheating the Aboriginals or, worse, destroying their Songlines), their unwillingness to live in the sordid closeness of the sedentary world.

The core of *The Songlines*, of course, is Chatwin's own encounter with the Aboriginals. Apparently he had intended to write a book that would have been a general theory of nomadism, and to that end traveled for many years. Perhaps it was for the best that *The Songlines* turned out to be a story of Chatwin's travels in a specific nomadic world, only buttressed, in "the moleskin notebooks," with the shards of that larger, abandoned project; for Chatwin is at his best when he is specific, evocative, and untheoretical. In contrast to his rather dubious theories about the origins of human aggression, the narrative of the journey to the Outback is beautiful, simple, and refreshingly tentative. "My reason for coming to Australia," Chatwin writes, "was to try to learn for myself, and not from other men's books, what a Songline was—and how it worked. Obviously, I was not going to get to the heart of the matter, nor would I want to." This is Chatwin the writer, who holds his learning lightly and knows that the purpose of the journey is the journeying.

THE ABORIGINALS' creation story was certain to appeal to Chatwin. They believe that their ancestors created themselves from clay, "hundreds of thousands of them," as Chatwin puts it, "one for each totemic species." Thus, if a person's totem is, say, the wallaby, this not only means that he is a member of the wallaby clan, but that he has "a wallaby dreaming." This dreaming, or song, is even more important to the Australian Aboriginals than their myth of origins, for they believe that "each totemic ancestor, while traveling through the country, . . . scattered a trail of words and musical notes along the line of his footprints."

As Chatwin construes it, Australia became for the Aboriginal clans one vast musical score, a thick grid of Songlines; to travel was a journey along these various songs. Indeed, the work that Chatwin watches Arkady perform is the charting of all the Songlines along the route of a proposed rail line, so that none are destroyed during the construction. But since, as Chatwin observes, "there was hardly a rock or creek in the country that could not or had not been sung," the real work is the well-nigh impossible task of reconciling two opposing understandings of place: the white view of a nature that is both mute and malleable, and the Aboriginal view of the singing land in which the right life is the "walk-about," abutting, as it does, at least in Chatwin's conception of it, in the "right" death. As he notes, beautifully, at the very end of the book:

> In Aboriginal Australia, there are specific rules for "going back" or, rather, for singing your way to where you belong: to your "conception site," to the place where your *tjuringa* is stored. Only then can you become—or re-become—the Ancestor. The concept is quite similar to Heraclitus's mysterious dictum, "Mortals and immortals, alive in their death, dead in each other's life."

It is when Chatwin reveals that the real subject of *The Songlines* is this "right way" to die that his book begins to soar. One can object to Chatwin's remorseless aestheticizing, and quarrel with his theories about nomadism and the origins of aggression, but only a foolish or arrogant reader could fail to recognize the beauty and seriousness of what Chatwin set out

HANNIBAL CROSSING THE ALPS

He urged his starving elephants upward into the snows,
the barges still smelling of Mediterranean brine,
packed with huddled troops, men of Carthage
in ice-covered armor, some wearing desert sandals
wrapped in leaves, elephants up to their necks in snow,
trumpeting, their trunks grabbing at crumbling clouds of snow.
The colossal gray boulders swayed, moved upward,
some tumbled back into the echoing ravines.
An avalanche, forests of ice fell on Africa.
In the morning soldiers gathered remnants of red and blue silk,
dry sardines and beans, gold goblets still sandy
from desert victories, live turtles meant for soup,
a tangle of chained goats and sheep meant for sacrifice.

O you runners, walkers, horsemen, riders of bicycles,
men of sense and small gesture, commuters like me,
remember Hannibal came down from the Alps
into the warm belly of Italy, and conquered.
It was twenty years later in another place
after errors of administration and alliance,
that he poisoned himself. What is remembered?
—His colossal head asleep on the sand of Tunis,
a few dates, confusion between victories and defeats,
his elephants.

STANLEY MOSS

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to do. *The Songlines* is, finally, a book about learning to die, and, in so doing, learning to live.

The last entry in the last chapter is Chatwin's *gai savoir* at its most relentless and its most magnificent. Arkady, his new wife, Marian, and Chatwin come upon three dying Aboriginal men:

> They were almost skeletons. Their beards and hair had gone. One was strong enough to lift an arm, another to say something. When they heard who Limpy was, all three smiled, spontaneously, the same toothless grin.
>
> Arkady folded his arms, and watched.
>
> "Aren't they wonderful?" Marian whispered, putting her hand in mine and giving it a squeeze.
>
> Yes. They were all right. They knew when they were going, smiling at death in the shade of a ghost-gum.

Chatwin is able to incarnate in his effortless, spare prose both the agony of death and the jubilation of being. Finally *The Songlines* is a book of consolation dressed up in a novel's clothing. If it fails to achieve everything its author intended, and even at times rightly gives offense, it is still one of the few recent books that seems to matter, and that people a hundred years on might read with pleasure, exasperation, and instruction.

DAVID RIEFF

David Rieff is the author of *Going to Miami* (Little, Brown).

FAIR SHAKE, FAIR SHARE

Whose Votes Count? Affirmative Action and Minority Voting Rights by Abigail M. Thernstrom

(Harvard University Press, 316 pp., $25)

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 broke the back of hard-core resistance to black political participation in the Deep South. For generations, the 15th Amendment had promised but failed to deliver a right to vote regardless of race. After the act was passed, a majority of Southern blacks actually registered and voted. But since 1965 the Voting Rights Act has been fundamentally recast. Abigail M. Thernstrom describes how the act's initial efforts to give black voters a "fair shake" in the South have been enlarged to ensure a "fair share" of electoral seats to minorities throughout the nation.

Thus the Voting Rights Act has brought affirmative action to the electoral sphere. How this came about is a complicated story, but the author rises to the challenge of clarifying it. Thernstrom blends a detailed understanding of legislative history, case law, and administrative politics with a strong concern for the plight of minorities and a keen sense of the give-and-take of electoral politics. Her book is a first-rate contribution on an issue of enormous significance, equal electoral opportunity; and her analysis is all the more welcome since the goal of proportional representation has occasioned so little public debate.

The issue of voting rights retains an aura of moral simplicity. The origins of the Voting Rights Act reinforced this, for the conflict behind the initial passage presented a moral drama of good and evil. In 1965 the denial of the right to vote on the basis of race was blatant in much of the South. With the passage of the act, discriminatory counties and states were singled out on the basis of their low voter participation rates and their use of literacy tests. The tests were suspended within these jurisdictions, which were then put in what Representative Henry Hyde later called "the penalty box": in order to block segregationist attempts to set up new barriers to black registration and voting, Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act required federal approval (called "pre-clearance") of all proposed changes in voting procedures in the designated jurisdictions.

The aim was clear, the cause compelling, the act successful. Southern politics changed as politicians learned to count and court black votes. The support that later extensions of the act secured from

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Southern representatives and senators signals the political transformation in the South. But the act that changed Southern politics has itself undergone significant change over the years. The opening wedge in making the Voting Rights Act something more than a law to enfranchise Southern blacks came from the Supreme Court. In 1969 it addressed the lingering uncertainty over exactly what kinds of voting changes had to be submitted to the Justice Department for pre-clearance; there were as yet no clarifying regulations.

The Court defined the requirement expansively, sanctioning federal objections not just to changes in the mechanics of registration and voting, but to annexations, redistricting, introduction of at-large systems, and so on. Enfranchisement was deemed to cover not only the ability to register and to vote, but also the context in which a ballot was cast. Thernstrom considers the decision correct, but she points out its troubling consequences: "The Court had implicitly enlarged the definition of enfranchisement. Now there were 'meaningful' and 'meaningless' votes—votes that 'counted' and those that did not. And once that distinction had been made, a meaningful vote was almost bound to become an entitlement."

FURTHER CHANGE soon followed. Judicial decisions, Justice Department enforcement, and congressional action gave the Voting Rights Act new meanings, and "the acquired legitimacy of one change obscured the questionable legitimacy of another." In an early reapportionment case Justice Felix Frankfurter called questions of democratic representation a "political thicket." In Thernstrom's view, the voting rights cases "are decisions that contain a story of vain thrashing through that thicket, of attempts to cut paths that resulted in still deeper entanglement." Moreover, in a reversal of the usual pattern, "the judicial decisions were shaped less by the statute than the statute by decisions."

The Justice Department invented, as well as enforced, the law. In the early years of applying Section 5 pre-clearance, an electoral change could be approved only if it left minority voters no worse off than before, as measured by potential minority officeholders. Yet despite Supreme Court decisions reaffirming this principle, called "non-retrogression," it has given way to administrative insistence on electoral arrangements that foster the maximum number of safe seats for minority candidates. Congress also renewed and extended the Voting Rights Act in ways that blurred the initial focus on the enfranchisement of Southern blacks. In 1970 literacy tests were banned, not just where their use signaled black disfranchisement, but nationwide. Amendments in 1975 extended the coverage to Hispanics and three other minorities—American Indians, Asian Americans, and Alaskan natives.

BUT THE amendments enacted by Congress in 1982 raise the most significant questions. In 1980, in *City of Mobile* v. *Bolden*, the Supreme Court ruled that discriminatory intent was essential to establish a constitutional violation of voting rights. To avoid a historical hunt for a "smoking gun," however, litigators in 1982 hoped to amend Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act to give blacks and other minorities new power to challenge election systems throughout the nation on grounds of discriminatory result rather than intent.

Proponents of revising the Voting Rights Act didn't suffer the rout that might have been expected, given the obstacles they faced: a Republican Senate, with Strom Thurmond chairing the Judiciary Committee, and a Republican president questionably committed to civil rights and demonstrably skilled in legislative showdowns. Nor was there well-focused debate of the issues at stake. While the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights masterminded the legislative fight, framing the debate, mobilizing supporters, and castigating critics, it encountered little in the way of serious opposition. Representative Hyde sidetracked attention from the attempt to revise Section 2—the issue deserving careful scrutiny—with proposals to alter Section 5 pre-clearance.

Meanwhile the Reagan administration took no position until after the terms of debate had been set, then waded in with a proposal that failed to rally support. Moreover, just as the bill was about to be considered by the Senate subcommittee, the administration announced it would grant tax-exempt status to nonprofit institutions even if they practiced racial discrimination. With that disastrous decision, the Reagan administration forfeited a leadership role on voting rights.

Ultimately, to facilitate Senate passage, Robert Dole offered a compromise. Among other things, it clarified the revision of Section 2, according to which minority voting power was to be considered unacceptably diluted where, based on the "totality of circumstances," minorities enjoyed "less opportunity than other members of the electorate to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice." Dole's compromise explicitly rejected the standard of proportional representation: "Nothing in this section establishes a right to have members of a protected class elected in numbers equal to their proportion in the population." With the Dole compromise, the bill sailed through the Senate. Even Reagan eventually backed it.

But the Dole compromise failed to stick, undergoing erosion in the courts. The revision of Section 2, billed by its backers before the legislature as a return to previous case law, a "restoration," turned out to be a profound transformation. Thernstrom documents the preoccupation in Congress with jurisdictions that politically exclude minorities. Yet reliance on the revised Section 2 has not been limited to situations of political exclusion; it has been extended even to jurisdictions where minorities have matched whites in political participation and have elected candidates of choice. The ability to carve safe minority seats with single-member districts in proportion to the minority population has become the standard by which electoral arrangements are judged.

IT IS IRONIC, in the light of the debate generated by affirmative action, that its emergence in the electoral sphere has escaped controversy. The silence is not hard to explain. Voting rights are a symbolically resonant issue, "the purest of mother's milk," as one participant in the legislative struggles put it. But there are also political reasons to avoid public debate over the meaning of equal electoral opportunity. Democratic officeholders typically depend on minority votes to get elected, and few Republicans can afford to risk appearing insensitive to minority concerns. As Thernstrom notes:

> Civil rights groups and minority politicians . . . have made attitudes toward minority voting rights a litmus test of sensitivity to questions of racial justice. . . . A tarnished image on civil rights jeopardizes the support of not only minority voters but also whites who see themselves as sympathetic to minority concerns and equate such sympathy with uncritical support for policies advocated by civil rights groups.

Moreover, Republicans gain from safe minority seats. Drawing districts with

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black population majorities necessarily means other districts are left whiter, more fertile grounds for Republican prospecting.

But Thernstrom tackles what others skirt, raising the tough questions about voting rights, such as:

> Are minorities sometimes better off with fewer seats but more diffused influence—a smaller number of blacks in office, but a greater number of representatives who owe their election to black constituents? If the ballots of white Democrats in an overwhelmingly Republican county "count," if Democrats who are never able to elect "candidates of their choice" are nevertheless fully enfranchised, what about black Democrats when no black ever wins?

The courts and the Justice Department have often answered such difficult questions by dismantling at-large election systems in which minorities have not held a proportionate share of elective offices; in their place, they create single-member district systems in which the minority constitutes an effective voting majority in a number of districts approximating the group's share of the population. The underlying assumption of such electoral engineering seems to be that the nation is too racially divided to support a politics that rises above race: minority representation requires minority officeholding since whites cannot represent non-whites, and minorities elected with white support have suspect credentials.

But there is a different approach, which emphasizes the role of the political process in helping to ameliorate racial and ethnic divisions. The rise in minority political clout and progress in racial relations offer proof and promise of a less race-conscious electoral process, in all but some exceptional jurisdictions. Of course, in those rare locales where blacks or Hispanics are still politically excluded a resort to federal electoral engineering can help to break open the political process, putting the choices of minority voters into office, which can be a step toward broadening all voters' horizons about multiracial representation. Should the remedy in these hard cases be applied more generally? It is this difficult question that Abigail Thernstrom ably addresses, and that too many others have avoided.

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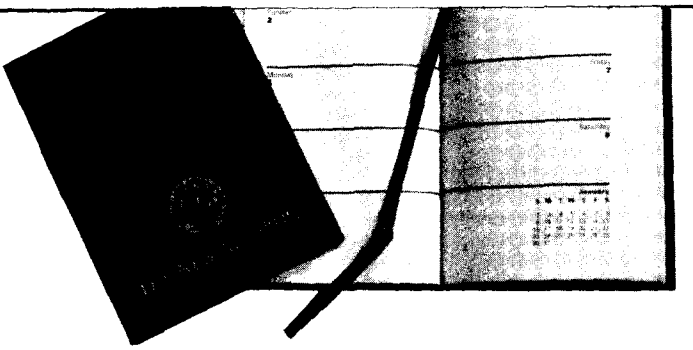

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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Dope Friends

IN E. M. FORSTER'S CAMBRIDGE, dons would sooner betray their country than their friends. But in the American Cambridge where I live, colleagues apparently don't hesitate to betray their friends even if refusing to do so wouldn't put them remotely close to betraying their country. It certainly was surprising to see Douglas Ginsburg's oldest and best chum, Harvard law professor Hal Scott, on TV (and quoted in the papers) asserting, with full knowledge of the political consequences of his words, that yes, he had witnessed his pal smoking pot at a faculty party. This was the same Scott who, like Ginsburg a Chicago school free marketeer, had only days before lavishly praised the aptness of the appointment. Scott was not, however, the only colleague to turn Ginsburg in to the press, which in our country increasingly performs the functions of the political police. "Give me a man," said Stalin's henchman, Lavrenti Beria, "and I will give you a case." In America, of course, a case is not usually constructed out of whole cloth. This is where the reliable informants come in. There were, according to reporters on the beat, no less than five such law school informants who testified to one or another joint-smoking episode. Their righteousness is no model for their students.

THE FBI ALSO must have asked Scott and those same colleagues the routine question about drug use. Were their answers to the bureau different from their answers to the media? There's no way to tell. Still, even having witnessed Ginsburg taking a toke at a party, an honest person might still have said no to the query "Does he use drugs?" Presuming, however, that Scott and associates told the feds exactly what they told the papers, how did Ginsburg's name make it past the initial investigation? My guess is that the FBI has a rather more sophisticated understanding of drug use than the press, seeing it contextually rather than literally or trivially. Triviality is, after all, the special province of the press. Once NPR had the reefer story, Ginsburg was doomed—but only because what the hostile media discovered about him lost him his right-wing supporters.

NONETHELESS, Bruce Babbitt and Al Gore were smart to confess the obvious, that they were born and have lived in their own time. Will anyone really begrudge Gore for having smoked grass in the madness that was Vietnam? As for the rest of the Democratic candidates, I just don't believe their denials. And in the chancy event that they are true, there is no special merit to them. Do we really want a president who, even in his youth, was so uncurious as not to try a joint just once? And so afraid to make himself vulnerable before friends? But drugs are a corrosive problem in urban America. It's so bad that in some Boston housing projects children sell crack and coke to their parents. Despite this, liberal Democrats remain rather indulgent about drugs, as they are about pornography. This is another reason why the party seems disdainful of what Robert Coles calls "the everyday moral struggles of ordinary people."

ON SECOND THOUGHT, I do believe Mike Dukakis's marijuana disclaimer, and for some of the very reasons I don't want him to win the nomination. In any case, the Dukakis campaign continues to unravel. First it was the malaise and the breaking of the momentum that followed the resignation of his top aide because of the Biden affair. Now it's the erosion of the only claim Dukakis could plausibly make on our attention, the highly touted economic "miracle in Massachusetts." A new TV ad was telling Iowans that what Dukakis "did for Massachusetts he can do for America." The centerpiece of the claim in Dukakis campaign materials was a General Motors plant in Framingham that didn't shut down two years ago. Last week came the announcement that the 3,700 jobs saved in 1985 were now lost. According to the *Boston Globe*, the GM closure follows the shutdown of a General Dynamics shipyard in Quincy, costing 5,000 jobs, and layoffs by General Electric and Wang in Lynn, Pittsfield, and Lowell, with a layoff toll of perhaps 10,000 more. In the last year Massachusetts experienced the fourth-largest drop in manufacturing jobs in the country. Now on top of the shrinking industrial base of the state, the financial services and real estate booms are fast going bust. There will not only be many more unemployed laborers, but there will be unemployed yuppies as well. What's still relatively secure about the Massachusetts economy is the high-tech industry that is drawn to the MIT-Harvard orbit. Even Dukakis has not claimed this magnetic field as his accomplishment. Much of this high-tech prosperity depends on defense contracts, and the newer jobs specifically on research for SDI. There aren't many claims left that Reagan can make on his own behalf. But he can claim some credit for at least this aspect of the prosperity of Massachusetts.

JUST AS MIKHAIL GORBACHEV was convening the comrades to hear his two-and-a-half-hour gloss on 70 years of Soviet history, students and scholars of the subject (and of allied fields) were converging on Boston for fests of their own. One was the 40th anniversary of Harvard's Russian Research Center; the other the convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, which, like other such academic assemblies, does for professors and researchers what the Chicago Mercantile Exchange does for pork bellies. The Harvard center has been a bastion of the old and, in my view, sensible hard-line toward the Soviets, unsentimental and skeptical. This is not, however, the future of the field. There is, in fact, an enormous Gorbachev fan club emerging in American universities, eager to overlook his every failing. You would think that his intellectual cowardice, much in evidence in the big speech, might weigh against him with intellectuals. Not at all. They were happy to excuse his formulaic apologia for the Hitler-Stalin pact. They were not troubled by the squeamish language, sometimes touched by actual nostalgia, with which he criticized Stalin. But at least he criticized Stalin. There was a panel at the AAASS where a more kindly revision of Stalin was under way. But the fate of reform in the U.S.S.R. will not be decided in the U.S.A. The limits of reform are not the hostile feelings of Washington but what seven decades of state socialism have done to the character and culture of peoples who had other and better alternatives.

M. P

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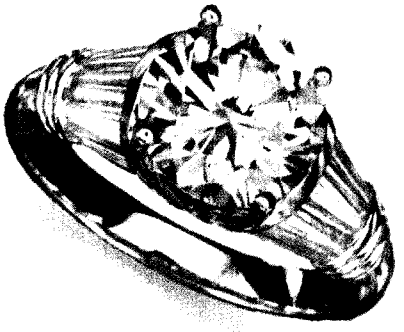

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